

THE ELSWICKIAN

NEWSLETTER OF ELSWICK PARISH COUNCIL

ISSUE 11

Thanks

Elswick Parish Council and the Parish Plan Committee would like to thank everyone in the village who contributed to the Children's Playground Appeal. Set to raise £1600 to complete the match funding required to secure the £30000 grant from the SITA Trust the response was magnificent with more than twice this amount collected. All the excess money will be used on the playground.

Whilst the children have made great use of the facility during the summer there has to date been no official opening. The Council intend to rectify this on Sunday 19th of October with an official opening at 2-00pm. The Council has decided to name the playground after Bill Thistlethwaite who died earlier this year and who was a great benefactor of the village as well as a former Parish Councillor and Honorary Citizen. Bill's son Edward has agreed to do the honours and we hope that as many people as possible will turn up to see the new playground. Refreshments will be served.

We are grateful to the following businesses for their contributions to the appeal.

Bonds of Elswick
Elswick Equestrian Centre
Fawcett Plumbing
The Boot & Shoe
TiggYWinkles Day Nursery
Top Class

Burton House Stores
Elswick Kennels
Sustainable Energy Systems Limited
The Ship Hotel
Tiny Paws Cattery
Treales Trailers

Britain in Bloom

The Council is pleased to announce that the village has once again been successful in the Britain in Bloom competition. For the past two years the village has been placed second runner up (third) in the North West in Bloom Large Village Category. This year we realised that we had previously been entered in the wrong category and as a result have gone one better by being judged joint runner up in the village category. The winning village was Chipping.

The Council has received many compliments this year for the magnificent display and the tidiness of the village. Thanks must go to Andrew and Geoff for all their hard work. Next year we intend to win the competition, providing Andrew's back is up to it.

New Parish Clerk

Unfortunately Victoria Elvy who has been the Parish Clerk for the last 2 years has had to resign for personal reasons. We welcome our new Clerk, Kathryn Coleman of Silverwood, Cartford Lane, Little Eccleston. Tel 01995 671499.

The Council would like to thank Victoria for all her hard work and wish her all the best for the future.

1106% Council Tax Rise

Now that we are halfway through the Financial Year all householders in the village will no doubt have had to pay at least something towards their 2008/9 Council Tax bill. Some of you will no doubt have noticed that a whopping rise of 1106% was recorded on the Council Tax bill against the amount levied by the Parish Council. This was totally outside the control of the Parish Council and due entirely to a scheme introduced by the Borough Council known as 'Differential Taxation'.

Readers of the local press will know that the Borough Council's finances are in dire straits. Indeed the global economy seems to be faring considerably better than Fylde's. The problem arose last year when the Borough Council found that it had made a £609,000 loss on its Streetscene (dustbin collection) department. The loss had actually been made on the Council's services in Wyre as Fylde Borough holds the contract for dustbin collection in Wyre Borough. Serious though this situation is, it is only half the story, as Fylde's contract with Wyre has a further two years to run and it is estimated that the contract will lose a further £500,000 in each of the next two years. This means that Council Taxpayers in Fylde will be forced to subsidise their neighbours in Wyre by an average of almost £60 per household.

Faced with the government imposing a capping limit on Council tax rises in excess of 5%, the ruling Lytham St Annes based Conservative administration at Fylde decided to meet the shortfall by closing St Annes swimming baths and cutting all funding to Parish Councils. Prior to this decision the Borough Council had provided annual grants to Parish Councils to maintain all parks, sports facilities and open spaces in the villages and it was on this basis that the facilities at the Village hall site in Roseacre Road were provided. These were mainly funded by lottery and sports council grants with Fylde providing guarantees to these bodies that the facilities would be maintained by funding from the Borough Council.

Unfortunately the Borough Council has now decided to rip up these agreements and expects every village to pay for its own facilities. This is particularly unfair on the Council Tax payers in Elswick as the facilities at the Village Hall site were provided not just for Elswick villagers but for people in a radius of 5 miles from the village. The Borough Council decision was made the day after the statutory date by which the Parish Council had to advise the Borough Council of its requirements. The Parish Council was therefore unable to influence the Borough Council's decision to impose a 1106 % increase on Elswick to make up for the grants previously provided by the Borough.

The Parish Council is determined to reduce this burden on the Council Taxpayers in the village and is currently reviewing all areas of Parish Council expenditure. One casualty of his review is that the Parish Council has had to close the football pitch for organised games. Unfortunately the Council felt that it could not continue to subsidise the use of the pitch and changing rooms at a cost of £2500 by a team which almost entirely comprised non Elswick players.

Footnote We understand that one of the ex-players from the Elswick summer league team played a trick in the summer on a former teammate. He phoned him pretending to a reporter from the Evening Gazette and asked him for his reaction to plans by the Parish Council to build houses on the pitch. This wind up was hugely successful as it actually prompted a demonstration at the pitch.

If anyone remains in any doubt on this matter the Parish Council would like to provide reassurance that the Council has no such plans and is totally committed to preserving this important facility for the village. The Council is currently exploring with the Football Foundation the possibility of reducing maintenance costs by upgrading the pitch through additional drainage.

Elswick Website Update

The old Elswick website at “thelocalchannel” has now been replaced with a completely new, restructured and easier to use site. The new site is at www.elswickparishcouncil.gov.uk.