

Acomb Parish Council – District Councillor’s Report September 2008

I think that everyone in Acomb will have been relieved to see that Acomb Post Office was included in the list of Post Offices to stay open, following the recent review. Our post office is safe, at least for now, but we still need to use it or lose it! The consultation period which has just ended demonstrates just how precious Post Offices are to their local communities, especially where they also support a village shop, as in Acomb.

The Boundary Committee are conducting an electoral review of Northumberland, following elections to the new unitary authority in May. As you know, all the district councils in Northumberland will cease to exist on April 1st next year, and the term of office of over 300 district councillors will end, leaving the 67 unitary councillors to take on their roles. The first stage of the review will look at representations on council size i.e. how many elected members does the new unitary authority require to run effectively? Rurality will be taken into account i.e. a large rural ward will be more time-consuming because of the additional travelling required; similarly a councillor living far from Morpeth may spend 3 hours travelling to Morpeth for a 1 hour meeting. Such circumstances may demonstrate a need for additional councillors in rural area. The consultation on this issue closes on September 15th. Further consultation on individual ward arrangements will take place later this autumn, with the final recommendations of the Boundary Committee going to the Electoral Commission in August 2009.

On Wednesday August 20th I was fortunate enough to attend a special preview tour of the new Wentworth Leisure Centre, incorporating the new Hexham Pool. This facility will be a tremendous asset to Tynedale in years to come and is designed to provide access to as many people as possible, including the less mobile. It includes a 25 metre, 6 lane pool, a 15 metre studio pool, 2 cafes and a new fitness centre with 40% more cardiovascular equipment and 10% more resistance equipment, compared to the previous facilities.

Like many in the area, I was sorry to see the old pool on Gilesgate close, as it held so many memories, but I hope that the new, airy state of the art facilities will encourage even more of us to take to the water, or to the exercise bike. The Wentworth Leisure Centre re-opens on Thursday August 28th, and is a credit to all those at Tynedale Council and North Country Leisure who worked so hard to bring the project to fruition.

Age Concern still need volunteers for the Rural Access Project, which enables elderly residents in Acomb to meet with others and go out on visits. For further information, contact Karen Moses at Age Concern on 01661 836011 or go to <http://acombparishcouncil.gov.uk/documents/DistrictCouncillorsAnnualReport290508.pdf>.

If you would like to discuss any of these matters further or if you have suggestions or concerns, please contact me on 01434 681487, e-mail jane.wrigley@tynedale.gov.uk.

Jane Wrigley
August 23rd 2008