

Acomb Parish Council – District Councillor's Report February 2009

First of all, a very happy New Year to everyone!

The sharp-eyed will have noticed that we now have 3 glass banks outside Acomb Village Hall, so that residents can recycle their glass right here in Acomb. This follows a long-standing request from the Parish Council and me for such a facility, and I am sure it will be well used.

Although Tynedale Council will cease to exist at the end of March, the staff continue to work hard for local residents and achieve at the highest level. It was announced just before Christmas that the Tourism Team at Tynedale Council, who run the district's Tourist Information Centres, have won the overall award in the 2008 Pride in Tynedale awards, hosted by the Hexham Courant. This was a fitting tribute to the service provided to visitors and locals at the TICs.

The council's Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which I chair, met recently with the council's representatives on the three main community partnerships, to monitor their progress and to hear of their achievements. Hexham, Haltwhistle and Prudhoe Community Partnerships are all making a real difference to their local communities, and are well managed, but there is some concern about future funding. The new unitary authority has agreed to continue for one year i.e. 2009/10 the funding currently provided by Tynedale, but after that there are no guarantees. Arrangements are now in place in all 3 partnerships to provide alternative funding streams, but the future is still uncertain.

At the same time, progress towards April 1st and the single unitary council continues, with the setting up of Community Forums across Northumberland. As you know, these have replaced the Belonging Communities, and are envisaged as forums for consultation and discussion, rather than as service deliverers. It is vital that communities get involved in these forums and have their say.

At the suggestion of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs, John Litherland, the Local Government Reorganisation Programme Manager from NCC addressed Full Council on January 13th, to bring district councillors up to date with progress. He emphasised that most Tynedale Council staff would not be moving to County Hall, and that front-line services such as refuse collection, planning and environmental health, would still be delivered from local bases such as Hexham. There is, however, still a long way to go.

Ofsted visited Acomb First School on Friday January 16th for a one-day inspection. Although the report is confidential at the time of writing, we will be able to give full details at the February Parish Council meeting

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
January 22nd 2009