

Parbold Parish Council

*Clerk: Mrs Elizabeth-Anne Broad JP, LLB (Hons), MA, CiLCA
1 Pinewood, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6UZ,
Tel: 01695 557678 Mob: 07973 340254
e-mail: parboldpc.clerk@yahoo.com*

Chairman's Report - Parish Meeting 30th April 2010

Council members: May 2009 – April 2010

Cllr Mrs Ros Wess (Chairman)
Cllr Brian Arnold
Cllr Charles Bithell
Cllr Mrs Denise Butts
Cllr Elliot Rance

Cllr Michael Hammond (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Rob Bailey
Cllr Mrs May Blake
Mrs Vikki Harray
Cllr Mrs Susan Raju

During the year the Council has considered **49 planning applications.**

The Parish Council awarded a total of £815 in the following charitable grants:

Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue £50
West Lancashire Crossroad, Caring for Carers, £50
Parbold Festival Committee £200
Parbold Youth Club £165.00
Carols around the Christmas tree £150
Parbold Baby and Toddler Group £50
Royal British Legion £100
Mencap £50

The council is a member of the following organisations:

Campaign to Protect Rural England
Lancashire Playing Fields Association
Lancashire Association of Local Councils

Cllr Michael Hammond serves on the Standards Board Committee.

Cllr Ros Wess and Cllr Michael Hammond as council representatives on the Local Area Committee were appointed to the Local Strategic Partnership.

Examples of Partnership working with:

- Father Gordon Beattie Our Lady & All Saints Church, Claire Griffin Our Lady & All Saints School, Rev Simon Glynn Christ Church Douglas in Parbold, Paul Smith Parbold Douglas C E School in conjunction with Officers from Lancashire County Council and the local Police Officer, ongoing discussions over traffic problems on Lancaster Lane.
- West Lancashire Borough Council on the recreation and leisure field on Alder Lane.
- Clerk's attendance at liaison meetings at West Lancashire Borough Council.
- Mill Leat Project in partnership with officers from West Lancashire Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, British Waterways and the Environment Agency.
- Tim Cornah and the Youth Group who have set up the council website.
- Dr Tony Charlton of Edge Hill University on the development of Parbold Active Life Style (PALS).
- Parbold Community Association with the continued refurbishment and enhancement of the village hall.
- Parbold Wildlife Group who help and advise on the management of the Biological Heritage Site and the Tree Wardens who look after all the other areas in the village.
- Cllr Hammond and I have attended a number of the Health and Well being seminars run by the CVS.
- Cllr Hammond and I with some help from Dominic Rigby LCC, put in a successful £15,000 bid to the Lancashire Environmental Fund toward the cost of a path around the Biological Heritage Site on Chapel Lane.
- I was delighted to help open The Pear Tree Community Cafe and I wish everyone involved every success for the future and my thanks for what they have all achieved.

The council considered a number of consultation documents over the year including:

- Communication and Community Strategy
- Housing Policy Draft
- Residential Policy Draft
- Parbold Parish Plan Draft
- LCC Minerals and Waste Consultation
- Lancashire Association Local Councils questionnaire – Devolved Services
- West Lancashire Local Development Plan Core Strategy
- Housing Need and Demand Study
- West Lancashire Heritage Strategy
- Lancashire Association of Local Councils

The council continues to be represented at West Lancashire Borough Council meetings and Lancashire County Council meetings, as well as smaller inter-parish meetings, such as CVS community workshops and the Society of Local Clerks meetings.

In March of this year the council held a Civic Service at Christ Church in Douglas Parbold, once again we were absolutely delighted to see so many representatives of outside bodies, including Rosie Cooper MP, the Deputy Mayor of West Lancashire Borough Council Cllr John Baldock, Mr Ken Cleary MBE Chairman Larger Councils Committee at NALC, and Cllr Mrs Sandra Cleary, Chairmen from other local councils and many residents of the village, our local uniformed groups including, cubs, scouts, brownies and guides. The Service was joyfully celebrated by Rev Simon Glynn who was joined by Father Gordon Beattie OSB, Tim Cornah and members of the scouts and youth club.

A new committee 'Alder Lane Recreation and Leisure Support Association' has been set up to help develop and obtain funding to improve the site for the enjoyment of all of residents of the village. This association will be registered as a charitable trust which will hopefully make fundraising easier.

Cllr Mrs Raju and I have signed up as members of the "Ownership of the NHS" meetings. Run by the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust they are asking what people want from their National Health Service and how the PCT can best deliver these services

As Chairman I was delighted when Parbold's youngest councillor, Elliot Rance joined us in March of this year and I wish him every success.

Being Chairman of the council has been extremely challenging but once again I have been very fortunate in having been given the opportunity to meet people of all ages, not only from this community but also other areas that I would not otherwise have had the chance to meet and I would like to thank each and every one of them for making myself and Cllr Hammond so welcome.

Especially enjoyable were several visits by Cllr Hammond and I to our two local primary schools, it is always a pleasure to meet with the children and staff and occasionally parents. A big thank you to a group of primary school children on the Burnside Estate who have taken it upon themselves to look after the play area there and they report to me any faults they find and they have even helped put them right, in my opinion they are extremely caring, sensible youngsters and a credit to their community.

To those councillors who have supported me over the last year I offer my heartfelt thanks.

Cllr Ros Wess
Chairman Parbold Parish Council

Parbold & District Ramblers Association was formed in May 1998, and is based in Parbold.

It has been in existence for 12 years and is a flourishing, friendly club with a current membership of 56, drawn not only from Parbold and the surrounding area, but from as far afield as Preston, Wigan and Chorley.

The club is affiliated to the national Ramblers Association and is fully insured.

Walks are organised on a once monthly basis, usually the first Sunday, and are mainly within a 50 mile radius of Parbold.

They are of varying difficulty, and are graded, to cater for the needs, and abilities, of all club members.

Average attendant on each walk is 25 – 30. Group members who wish to, take turns in leading the walks, and the group has a very experienced leader and Safety Officer to advise and train other members to organise and lead the outings.

The group meets one a month, two Wednesdays prior to each walk date, at the Red Lion Hotel, Newburgh, where an activity can be viewed, to discuss the coming walk. These meetings allow the club to function also on a social basis, social events, and extra outings now becoming a regular feature of the club's activities. A walking weekend has become an annual event, last year a weekend visit to Durham was organised. Guided City Walks, meals out and a Christmas meal and get together are all very popular and well attended.

In conclusion, Parbold & District Ramblers Association is a successful, friendly, local walking group, with an increasing membership, drawn mainly from the local area.

Summary:

Name: PARBOLD & DISTRICT RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
Founded: MAY 1998

Venue: RED LION HOTEL, NEWBURGH

Officers: MR J KELLY (CHAIRPERSON) 01257 463057
MRS M HEYTON (TREASURER) 01257 464215
MRS N FOULDS (SAFETY/TRAINING OFFICER)
POSITION VACANT (SECRETARY)

Membership: 56

Parbold Women's Institute

Parbold Women's Institute celebrated its 80th birthday in June 2009 and we hope we are as much a part of village life now as we were 80 years ago. Our membership is open to all ladies and is non sectarian and non party political. Our aims are to

improve and develop the lives of rural women. We have had speakers in the last year on such diverse topics as journalism, the law and hat designing. We have a book club, knitting club, walking group; go on regular theatre trips and outings and have the opportunity to go on educational courses at a county level. We also serve the wider community by holding a fortnightly lunch club for the elderly, fortnightly whist and dominoes, a monthly disco for under 13's together with occasional quiz nights or other social events open to all. We also have a concert party who perform an Annual Pantomime which is one of the highlights of the village.

We own our own hall which we maintain to a good standard and hire out to other village groups enabling them to be successful too. The hall may also be hired by individuals for parties etc.

Anne Pryor, President.

Parbold Village Festival

The Festival has been running in its present format for a number of years now. The 2009 event was village based because of problems with Alder Lane Playing Fields. It was no ideal but worked much better than 2008. The main venues were:

- Village Hall, where the show side was based, barbeque and circus skills with some stalls outside.
- Women's Institute Hall, where tea and cakes were served, entertainment was outside and some stalls in front of the shops on the Common.
- Railway Pub, where the fairground rides were placed.
- Parbold Library with children activities inside and Barn Owl Bill outside.

Wherever the venue the aims of the committee remain the same, i.e. to provide a day of fun, competition and entertainment for all ages, to be followed on the Sunday by a Service of Reflection and Thanksgiving.

We hope that we succeeded with this.

Anne Pryer, Chairman

Age Concern, Thursday Club

The above club has been running now for eleven years, first at the Village Hall and now at the Women's Institute Hall. The numbers have dropped somewhat in recent months but those regulars who do come, enjoy it. We have recently been joined by some of the residents of Lindsay House Care Home who thoroughly enjoy the trip out.

Last summer we took the members for a trip to Golden Days Garden Centre where they had a good browse around and a fish and chips meal.

We run fortnightly from 12pm and serve a lunch of soup and sandwiches followed by tea and cakes. From time to time we have activities such as making greetings cards and we have visits from Shop Mobility etc.

Anne Pryer

PARBOLD WILDLIFE GROUP



Chairman: Chris Collins
Treasurer: Gabrielle Hardman
Secretary: Margaret Abel Tel: 01257 462909
Email: abelchris@talktalk.net

Report for the Parish Council's Annual Meeting April 2010

General

2010 is designated by UN as Biodiversity Year. This is of special interest within Parbold as we have a site of Biological Diversity Status – the Chapel lane meadow owned and managed by the Parish council. We are proud of our involvement in maintaining this site – one of very few herb rich lowland meadows left in Lancashire.

The Group meets bi-monthly and is continuing to develop and progress as a Group within the local community.

Activities

We were represented at the Lancashire Environment Fund day at the Village Hall which was followed by a guided walk around Chapel Lane Meadow and the immediate surrounds.

We have had talks from Jonty Hiley (Birds coping with extreme conditions), Jon Hickling (Natural England), The Environment Agency (Invasive Species) and the Group also enjoyed a visit to Gorse Hill Nature Reserve.

On a (real!) Winter Walk in the Parbold/Dalton area, led by Jonty Hiley, 43 species of bird were spotted and identified. Stalls at Newburgh Fair and the Green Fayre at Beacon Country Park were manned by group members and received a lot of interest.

The work needed to comply with the Management Plan at Chapel Lane Meadow continues. This has included coppicing and replanting, pulling thistles and ragwort, pond clearing, and putting up bird and bat boxes.

Members report sightings of local wildlife and these are recorded and passed on to the LCC Countryside Officer who can then extract any unusual ones and pass them to the County Recorder. Anyone wanting to report interesting sightings in the area should pass the information to our Secretary Mrs. Margaret Abel 01257 462909 abelchris@talktalk.net. This includes plants as well as animals, birds and insects. The interest may derive from the actual species or the date ie. “the earliest cuckoo”

Future

We recognise that it is inevitable that much of our activity is associated with the Biological Heritage Status site at Chapel Lane where we support the PPC who are responsible for maintaining the Status of the site. This work is important both as a direct contribution to the management of a wonderful community asset and as support for the PPC who are able to use our volunteer hours and management activity as the basis for

some of the funding they get for this site. As usual the essential annual mowing of the meadow (and the necessary removal of the mowings) has been a difficult operation. In 2009 the PPC met most of the cost. Fortunately this Group managed to obtain funding to cover the gap and volunteered to manage the operation. We were pleased to learn that the PPC had used their compliance with the Chapel Lane Meadow Management Plan to support a successful application for funding from LEF, committing the Council to ensuring that the mowing takes place annually. The Parbold Wildlife Group urges the PPC to make an annual budget for the site so that the mowing and any other essential work is carried out in a timely fashion. As a community asset and an important site within Lancashire we believe that it merits this level of commitment and planning.

We continue to develop a wider programme of talks, walks and visits and welcome any suggestions for inclusion.

We are also considering how to influence the management of other sites within the area that are valuable for wildlife. For instance there are two grass verges within the Parish that the County Council have designated as "Special" which means that they should be managed within guidelines particular to such verges.

Mill Leat is still the subject of development thinking and we look forward to co-operating with the PPC when plans are finally agreed.

Anyone who knows of an area or site that might be of interest to the Group or which needs some support or TLC should get in touch with our Secretary – Mrs Margaret Abel 01257 462909. We may not be able to help but we probably know someone who can. Dominic Rigby, Countryside Officer with LCC is an adviser to the Group and Jon Hickling of Natural England (a Parbold resident) is an Adviser and member. Both are experts and are willing to share their enthusiasm and expertise. The Group in particular and the village in general are lucky to be able to call on these people.

Chris Collins
Chairman



REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 30th APRIL 2010

Since the last Report our Group of seven active members (we recruited a new member this year) has continued to maintain the gardens at the Village Hall and the Jubilee Garden, as well as the small garden on Lancaster Lane. We have also looked after the planters outside the shops. This activity takes place weekly on a Tuesday morning and includes litter

picking. Once again we received a sack of bulbs from a grateful resident and these were added to the ones already planted around the village.

We have continued to monitor the woodland at Bramble Way. Having taken advice from local experts we coppiced and thinned some trees, together with Parbold Wildlife Group, and planted 40 -50 shrubs and trees to create more understorey. Lancashire County Council provided the plants which we collected from Mahoods Nursery in Lathom.

We have also maintained the shrub beds at Bramble Way. The Group cuts the hawthorn hedges at the Village Hall and on the canal bridge to prevent them becoming too large to manage and to keep them clear of the pavement.

Members of the Group have carried out approximately 400 hours of voluntary work on Parish Council sites during the last year and also funded the purchase of some new tools.

Margaret Abel
Secretary

Report for 2009-10

PYC Youth Services (Parbold Youth Club) & Third Way Community Interest Company

Dual website: www.pycyouthservices.org and www.3rd-way.com

Introduction

The last report showed a period of consolidation and planning.

This report shows the results of that consolidation and planning work and the exciting project that culminated in the official opening of the Pear Tree Community Café on 1st April 2010.



Turning Point

As in the last report, there was a turning point for our activities in Parbold Village, the same is true of 2009.

Just when we were beginning to think that all was lost, we were awarded a small grant by an organisation called "UnLimited – the foundation for Social Entrepreneurs" for our project that eventually became the Pear Tree Community Café and Youth Centre.



The key difference with this project was that the young people would build the facilities themselves and deliver a project that would engage the whole community and break down barriers.

The only slight problem was..... The grant was £5000, and our project cost considerably more....

The turning point came at the UnLimited awards day on 8th May 2009. We met up with another social enterprise called "Brighter Futures" from Salford. They were funded by the local government agencies to provide training to young people in construction skills. They needed "external projects" in order to enable their trainees to formally qualify and we needed supervision and a safety management system.

We approached them to see if our small grant could be re-cycled and if they could use our project as an external site, training our own young people to actually undertake the work.

They AGREED !

The Project

On 3rd July 2009, a large number sledgehammers were given to the group of willing volunteers and over the course of two days, the premises at 3 Station Road, Parbold – the site of the old Parbold Health Club was completely gutted.

Thankfully, our business partner in the venture and landlord, Alistair Swift is incredibly understanding and has been massively instrumental in helping us work through the refurbishment. Without his willingness to participate in this non profit making venture and the giving of so much of his spare time and effort, none of this would have happened.





Many young people gave up their entire summer break and beyond as the project moved forwards. Many difficulties were overcome and slowly, people began to see that this group of young people were an asset to the village, not a problem.



Slowly, but surely, the project neared completion, spanning an extremely cold winter, where we could not even feel our hands as we worked in the building.

One of the team leadership is a Head Chef. Without him, the project would have halted many times. He stuck at the project, volunteering the time he could to supervise the construction and simply to be there for everyone. His advice created the kitchen and the café area. The team that worked with him laid the floor, fixed the roof, fitted new walls, built toilets, dug a huge 2 metre deep trench for the drainage and put the finishing touches to the project.

A great sense of teamwork was created during the project and in truth, all of our efforts through most of 2009 and the start of 2010 were focussed on delivering the project. We were staggered by the sheer professionalism of the young people. From the age of 12 to 25, they all worked together to deliver a project of which they can all be rightly proud.

Then on 1st April 2010 – we had the pleasure of an official opening with both the Mayor of West Lancashire and the Chairman of Parbold Parish Council cutting the ribbon (almost) simultaneously.

And Finally...

So, where are we now:

Thanks to the young people, our landlord and a large number of generous organisations and individuals, we have a building that is for the benefit of the whole community.

Please see our website: www.3rd-way.com for the list of organisations and people that have helped us so much. THANK YOU.

It is a Community Café.

Its whole intention is to be a service to the community and to trade to raise money to pay its bills and for the work of the youth club, so that it doesn't have to continually go "cap in hand" for grants and hand-outs.

What do we need ?

CUSTOMERS ! – in order that the venture succeeds and provides a facility for the village, it needs customers. As a non profit making venture, it still has outgoings – wages, utilities, stock, rent etc... so it does need to make money.

The result – a facility that the young people can call their own, where the generations can meet and mingle in safety and where we can plan and hold meetings and gatherings knowing that it is something that we have all created together.

It is our intention to start Christian Meetings in the facility – details of these will be publicised on our website and via notice boards, newsletter and any other means possible.

Our desire has always been to create something of value in the centre of the village that would bring people together and show that Christianity is not simply something that lives behind closed doors on a Sunday – but that it can make a positive difference in a community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this

Tim & Alison Cornah (01257) 464129

Our Lady and All Saints

Lancaster Lane

Parbold

Lancashire WN8 7HS

Tel: +44 - (0)1257-463248 Fax: +44 - (0)1257-462495

e-mail: parbold@hotmail.com

Web-site: <http://www.ourladysparbold.org.uk>

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The Parish of Our Lady and All Saints Parbold serves the villages of Parbold, Bispham, Hilldale, Newburgh and the northwest sector of Dalton.

Since 1884 the Church, in Lancaster Lane, is a dominant feature of Parbold with its 165' high spire. The Village can see this floodlit during the hours of darkness. The Village can also hear the Church Bell ringing the hour chimes each hour, from 0900 to 2100, as well as ringing the traditional Angelus at 1200 and 1800.

A real safety hazard continues to be the parking of vehicles on Lancaster Lane during the School run. Exit from Our Lady and All Saints is considerably hampered by vehicles which are parked right up to the entrance, thus obscuring the driver's vision of vehicles legitimately using Lancaster Lane. It will not be long before a very serious accident takes place involving school children.

A Parishioner voluntarily cares for the well-kept Church grounds for which commendations were received from the Best Kept Village Competition. Whilst the paths are technically private – with no legal rights of way – many locals do use them as a short cut to the Village. The Priory outside Toilet – probably the only Public Toilet in the Village – although a private Toilet – is also used by the local Community.

The Parish is actively involved with Christ Church Parbold and Elim Pentecostal Church supporting and revitalising people's interest in the Christian faith and local Community.

Bi-monthly meetings of the Clergy of Our Lady's with the Clergy from Christ Church Parbold, Elim Pentecostal Church and Christ Church Newburgh are also held. The Parish's SVP Group – the Saint Vincent de Paul Society – provides a social service for all the above mentioned Villages. The SVP visit the Sick and provide for the needy.

Parbold Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting – 30th April 2010

4th Parbold & Dalton Brownies

We currently have 29 Brownies, increasing to 30 later this year; five warranted Guiders (although one of those is now at University), two Pre-Warranted Guiders (although one of those is also at University) and two Young Leaders. This last year has been a particularly busy one as Girlguiding's Centenary Year was launched in September 2009. Our Unit participated in a Division Launch Event at Burscough with an afternoon of fun activities, stalls, crafts, entertainment and food. As a Unit we have worked on the Stargazer and Road Safety badges and we are currently working on the Adventure 100 Badge – doing lots of different challenges as part of the Centenary celebrations.

We have raised money for the Red Cross Appeal for victims of the earthquake in Haiti and for the new Hut-on-the-Hill at various events. The Brownies have been litter picking around Parbold, to Chapel Lane Meadows to see the orchids and special wildflowers and grasses, swimming, learning to knit, went to the local Pantomime and to see "The BFG" in Liverpool where they were lucky enough to have a back stage tour and to meet the actors and Stage Manager; they enjoyed a trip to Sealife in Blackpool with the Rainbows and have made individual Centenary Scrapbooks. We joined in the Mothering Sunday and Remembrance Day Church Parades as well as Parbold Parish Council's Civic Service and the Carols Around the Tree at Parbold Village Hall.

We have also been on Pack Holiday at the Adventure House Waddow and were lucky enough to get tickets to join in One World One Beat in Southport – an exciting day of performing arts to celebrate Thinking Day 2010. This event was mirrored across the country and it was very inspiring to have a live link up with the eight other Guiding Regions to see their One World One Beat activities. We are looking forward to completing our Adventure 100 challenges over the next term to earn a very special badge and to our next Pack Holiday at The Adventure House, Waddow in early May.

Chairman: Mrs V Kinnish, 9 Brambley Court, Rectory Lane, Standish, WN6 OJZ Tel 01257 421526

Douglas Music, Parbold's 36th season of musical events has been the most successful of the last decade. Three seasons ago the charity resolved to present all its events in Parbold Village Hall and to throw its efforts into a partnership with Parbold Community Association to improve the hall's facilities. Douglas Music secured generous funding of £15,00 from The Peter Moores Foundation to improve the auditorium and over the two years of the improvements has also committed almost £5,00 of its own funds to the general improvement of the hall. Douglas Music's original decision and subsequent commitment has been totally vindicated.

The season just ended bears witness to the success of that decision. Amongst a varied range of high quality music making of all kinds, it included a Beethoven recital of incomparable quality by arguably Britain's most famous and distinguished pianist, John Lill. After his concert, John praised the intimacy of the auditorium's seating arrangement and how it engaged an audience and the auditorium's perfect acoustics. All artists commented positively on the quality of what has been created. Furthermore it gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to report that the attendance at events is now 75%, so it can justly be said that audiences too appreciate what has been achieved. Moreover, Douglas Music's records show that half the audience comes from Parbold and nearby. The other audience is coming from much further afield as the reputation of the quality of the programming and venue becomes more widely known and appreciated. There is a growing number of annual subscribers. And in all this, Douglas Music has not changed its ticket price structure.

The reputation of the quality of Parbold's venue and Douglas Music's welcoming organisation is becoming widely known and is now appealing to some of the best and most sought-after musicians in Britain.

To demonstrate what is happening, I would like to take a couple of minutes to tell you about the artists for 2010 – 2011. Amongst those appearing are the National Champion's Leyland Brass Band, Angela Lear, piano, in a Chopin Anniversary Concert and Will Oinn, oboe, from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Ensembles performing include Alan Barnes, saxophone (2001 and 2006 BBC Jazz Instrumentalist of the Year), Bruce Adams, trumpet and Dan Wieldon, piano (winner of the National Jazz Pianist title) and the Classic Jazz Trio from the BBC Philharmonic and for the Christmas concert, The Lancashire Sinfonietta. This is an ensemble of professional musicians, conductors, and soloists born or educated in Lancashire and working in national orchestras, who return to the county each year for a series of concerts sponsored by Lancashire County Council.

Solo concerts by Martin Roscoe, piano, Craig Ogden, guitar, with Alison Stephens, mandolin (Craig is known nationally from his Classic FM CD collections), Nicola Benedetti, violin (2004 winner of BBC Musician of the Year and since acknowledged internationally as the finest and most thrilling of the new generation of violinists and also appearing in this year's BBC Proms), and finally the international pianist Noriko Ogawa, who has become a friend and ambassador for Douglas Music.

Additionally Douglas Music hope to win a grant to offer musical workshops for the local primary schools and to add a popular charity event to its final programme.

Claire Griffin, Head Teacher from Our Lady & All Saints Primary School Bradreth Drive, delivered a verbal report. She reported on last year's Gallery where everyone was invited to come along and view the children's art work with a Parbold theme. There were some wonderful pictures with captions: one picture of the PWI building had the caption, "so much fun in one little building". Other subjects included the school's new outdoor classroom, Parbold Windmill, trees and other things in their local environment. The exhibition was called Parbold - A Sense of Place. This year's exhibition will begin soon and this has the title Who do we think we are? - looking at history and local community. Mr Griffin invited any community contribution so if anyone is particularly knowledgeable about Parbold's past for example, could tell the children what it was like to go to school in Parbold "in the olden days". The meeting noted that John Virgo, local historian, lived on Wood Lane. It was intended that the lesson plans in many subjects be set around the theme. Mrs Griffin was particularly keen to involve the community as the site of the school tends to be a little tucked away, in an area where no-one passes by.

The School Development Plan was currently concentrating on maths to ensure that standards be as good as possible to enable every student to reach their full potential. New methods of calculation are not like those used years ago so many parents struggle to understand the working out produced by their children. Four members of staff took four rules explaining them to parents from beginning. Cllr Mrs Wess remarked that she was most impressed during a recent visit to see that the children were calculating house points during Assembly and this was done with ease and without calculators. Mrs Griffin continued to explain that there was a move to make Our Lady's a Dyslexic friendly school, not just for dyslexic children. She explained that they had radically changed assessment and tracking techniques to keep an eye on exactly how each child is doing. They had shown parents how a child is tracked (with the name blacked out) and parents love to see how improvements were progressing. The school continued close community links, having participated in the Parbold Douglas Music Society Christmas Concert – Nigel from the BBC Philharmonic came into school and this link with a well established group and talented musicians was invaluable inspiration to the children. The school was part of the West Lancashire Food Growing Partnership and was growing radishes, lettuce etc. The gardening club would welcome any help from anyone with a particular love of gardening. Fertilized duck eggs are now being incubated in school to the great interest of the children and the care taker is getting a chicken coop. Into the wider community the school now has links with a school in Africa. The African school is in an area of significant deprivation and this gives the Parbold children insight into this different way of life. They were shocked that the African school has only one

computer amongst 300 pupils. The children sent Christmas Cards introducing themselves. An area of improvement was identified as although the school always had high writing and reading results, it was felt that children were not reading for pleasure. To remedy this small comfortable areas with bean bags and drapes have been set up and this has led into a book club where children recommend books to each other. Ethos and citizenship continue to be a main aim – high SAT results are great but children can't achieve full potential if they are not happy in their environment. Children going above and beyond being good are always rewarded. There is a new scheme with "very special chairs" for extra friendly pupils. Five new children have joined the school since Easter and each one of them has been bowled over by how friendly the school is and this speaks volumes. Two little girls wrote a WELCOME poem during their playtime (not in a lesson).

When you
Enter this
Lovely school
Consider yourself
One of the special
Members of a group who
Enjoy working and learning.

Finally, there are building plans for a new group room, new classroom, and internal reorganisation of the toilets to provide for disabled toilets. It is hoped that the area near reception can be redesigned to accommodate an independent learning resource where computers can be installed. Possibly this area could incorporate some community use which may allow the school to access further funding for computer equipment.