

# THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 68

February 2016

## EDITORIAL

Deadline for next issue 26 March 2014

### SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST

### NOTICE OF AGM

To be held at 7.30pm on  
**WEDNESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**  
in the AIDAN ROOM  
BURC (ST. PAULS) CHURCH  
Please contact the Secretary by 25<sup>th</sup>  
March if you wish to join the committee.

## NEWS FROM THE TRUST

As you will note from the above advert, our **AGM** will be taking place next month. As we have said many times before we are in need of some fresh blood on our main committee. We are in fact at a bit of a critical stage at the moment. By this I mean that the numbers on the committee have been dwindling over the past couple of years and yet the expectations on us have been increasing dramatically.

The Trust was initially started to carry out small project works with some local events to get people out and meeting up together. It seems that this has now reversed. We have drifted into holding events, some like the Seaside Festival obviously quite large, with the project works taking a bit of a back seat. And we have an extensive range of projects that we could undertake but there are too few of us to do this!

Of course, being on a committee is not to everyone's liking. If we had enough people involved in the Trust we could then have smaller teams working on specific projects or events. I do not want to go on too long about this but we would like to hear from anyone who can give a little of their time. If you want to discuss this any further, then please get in touch and we can perhaps help you to decide if it for you, or not as the case may be.

We are constantly asking you for donations for our raffles and tombolas but these are much

appreciated and a good way to help us out. So please keep them coming, we have no objections to you trying to win them back again!

Talking of events, our first concert will be upon as shortly, details are as follows.

Highlights Rural Touring Scheme  
presents:

**Tom McConville Trio with  
Jane & Phil Waites**



**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February  
@ 7:30pm**

**BURC (St Pauls Church)**

Tickets Adult £7.50/u17's £4

Family ticket £20

(includes light refreshments)

on sale in Spittal Food Store,

call 07752 403409 or online at

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/highlights](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/highlights) &

[www.beboxoffice.com](http://www.beboxoffice.com)

email: [events@spittalisgreat.co.uk](mailto:events@spittalisgreat.co.uk)

News of our other activities are reported under the following separate headings.

*Mike Greener – Secretary SIT*

## GARDENING GROUP

The flower beds along the street are looking very good considering the weather and the hard work of the Gardening Group should be complimented, especially as they worked on into the depths of December! Our **Spring Fair** is being held on April 9<sup>th</sup> and as usual, all proceeds will go towards our gardening activities. The Fair will have the usual stalls, raffle, tombola, refreshments etc but this year we thought we would like to have a few more

car boot type stalls. If you would like a stall or have any bric-a-brac to donate please contact me on 01289 308813 or Sheila Heckles on 01289 331994. We are also looking for flower pots as we are hoping to have a plant stall, we can collect any donations.

We will be entering Berwick in Bloom again this year and we are ever hopeful of gaining that elusive Gold. We know that we will be getting less financial aid from the council this year so our fund raising for plants, compost and fertiliser is very important to us so that we can keep up and even raise the standard.

*Mau Watkins*



Following last year's success, the Trust is inviting kids to enter our FREE ANTI LITTER COMPETITIONS - 2016. Entries will be judged in age related categories on creativity, originality and expression of anti-litter in the following categories:

- write & perform a song/rap
- write and design an informative leaflet/booklet
- write a story
- design a poster with a slogan
- enter a quiz
- colour in a picture
- make something out of litter/recycled
- your own idea to stop people littering

Entries must be received by midnight 6th June 2016. See our web site for full details or phone Raine Doelberg on 01289 298369.

The competition is open to individuals, schools and clubs from both sides of the Border as this reflects the area from which most of the debris washes up on our beaches. Trophies will be awarded to schools/clubs with individual prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each category, and lots of certificates. Short listed finalists will be invited with their families and teachers to the Award Ceremony & Tea which will be held on Saturday July 9th in St Paul's Church. The competition will again be sponsored by local businesses and public donations.

In 2015, 660 youngsters took part, the eldest was 18, and the youngest 18 months. The School Trophy was won by Broomlands Primary, Kelso, the Club Trophy by Spittal Scouts. Donated prizes included family days out at local attractions.

This competition is intended for youngsters of any ability including those with a learning disability. To reflect this, some entries may be judged separately with extra prizes and certificates.

*Raine*

## **OLD FISH FACTORY**

As we reported in the last issue of The Point, the Trust has negotiated with the landowner to put up displays in the boarded window spaces of the building at the junction of Sandstell/Dock Road to improve the entrance to the village. A display of metal printed boards with a photographic history of the village will be created, with the advice of the Berwick Archivist, to provide visual interest until the area is developed.

The recent commercial use of some of the properties has been welcomed, however the Trust have raised concerns over some aspects as to the redevelopment of these buildings. We largely agree that the planning application will be a welcome change from the longstanding derelict and dreary appearance of these buildings as we enter the village. Some of these concerns include:

- An area of car parking in the previous plans of November 2014 has now been omitted, but we believe it needs to be made clear to the developer that this is common land and cannot be reinstated as a car parking area at a later date.
- The present use of buildings includes commercial units and was primarily a business area in times past. The plans do not allow for any commercial opportunity in an area where jobs are at a premium.
- There are concerns raised regarding the lack of flood prevention structures such as a sea wall, flood gate and the apparent lack of sufficient surface water drainage in the construction.
- The modern buildings appear to be designed as holiday properties and not for residential use. They have no gardens and are still very closely packed with the emphasis upon height for internal space rather than good design to fit into the area.

The Trust recognises the retention of older buildings in the plans, including the listed smoke house. Demolition of the newer sheds

and buildings, not of historic importance, raise no concerns.

The smokehouses are valued by the Spittal community and have been considered by the Trust as a possible project for refurbishment for historic interest. The Fishing Shiel nearby has been purchased by the Trust for that reason. It will be developed for a use whereby the historic structure is retained and displayed. These two buildings could be linked in some way if there was some collaboration between the developer and the Trust to enable the public to view their previous use.

*Dorothy Slater*

## A VIEW FROM THE PROM



We may not be leaning on the Prom railings like this for much longer. They are in a poor state being badly corroded, particularly on the seaward side. Let's hope

that they do not just a lick of paint or we may find ourselves on the beach instead! We also find ourselves standing in running water after the recent heavy rains. The runoff from the track up to the cliff tops has been diverted onto the football field and down the path onto the Prom. In cold weather we will have to have our skates on!

*Beachcomber*

## SPITTAL FIRST SCHOOL



Firstly, we would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year; we have had a very busy and successful start to our Spring Term at Spittal First School. You may be aware that Mrs Kiff has taken on the role of Acting Head Teacher.

We have developed a new motto-

**Create Achieve Respect Enjoy**

**From the Sea to the Stars!**

We believe this reflects not only the logo and aims of the school but also that of the community. It also encourages children to understand that with hard work they can reach their full potential.

Here at Spittal, we love to read widely and for pleasure and are often asked what our favourite books are therefore you can find pictures of our staff with their favourite books on our newly updated school website. One of our pupils, Jay McLenan was runner up in the 53 sleeps reading challenge which was open to settings

across Northumberland. Our school winner was Ellis Johnston.

Our sports teams participated in the Tri-Golf competition and Skipping Festival at which we achieved third place.

As you may be aware due to the demand for places and popularity of the school the County Council are investing in our school with the building of an additional 2 classrooms. Class sizes are kept to a maximum of 30 therefore we have employed additional teaching staff.

Building will start in February and is due to be completed in August. It is hoped that disruption will be kept to a minimum.

Exciting times ahead!

## BERWICK FOOD BANK

The Berwick Food Bank is run by the Berwick Community Trust and volunteers, has been going for about 3 years, and distributes between 5 and 10 bags of food every week, mostly in the Berwick area, but also to Belford, Wooler, Alnwick and Seahouses. Agencies such as the Jobcentre, Citizens Advice Bureau and churches try to identify which families/individuals are in need, and then refer people to the Trust, who then assess why there is a need for that family/individual (most often benefits delays and/or loss of job), then provide a food bag if necessary, and work with other agencies to try and help solve the problems causing lack of income in the first place.

No-one is able to receive food bags indefinitely (2 to 4 times is the norm) and, contrary to popular belief, no-one can simply 'walk in from the street' and be given food - everyone is assessed according to need. Often, people who could most benefit from a food bag don't even know about the food bank, or are too proud to receive 'free' food. If you know anyone who is having trouble affording food for themselves or families, and could benefit from this service, please call the Trust on 01289 330955.

Anyone wishing to donate food can do so St. Paul's Church, Spittal, or at Asda - all donations are gratefully received, but only 'store cupboard' items please (tins, rice, pasta, cereals etc) as fresh food could go off before handed out, and sorry, but no home-made items - unfortunately, these cannot legally be handed out (we know, it seems daft).

While it can seem unbelievable that such a scheme is needed, the number of food banks has increased tenfold in the last 5 years, helping over 50,000 people in the North-East alone. While other factors no doubt contribute to

the need, the most common reason by far given for lack of income is delay of benefits (eg. after losing a job) and the Government's policy of enforcing severe benefit sanctions (money is simply cut off) for up to 6 weeks. Hopefully, in the future there won't be a need for food banks, but right now, hundreds of thousands of people rely on them to feed themselves and their families. Anything you can do to help is much appreciated. Thank you.



Berwick Town Council is taking the lead in creating a Neighbourhood Plan and will consult with residents and businesses to help determine the future look of Berwick, Spittal & Tweedmouth.

Neighbourhood plans allow local people to shape decisions about how land is used. Where do we need houses, schools, parks and places to work? It is not about money, but if done well our plan will attract investment and make our town a better place to live in. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be used by Northumberland County Council, together with their Core Strategy, as a basis for deciding planning applications.

The Town Council have set-up a Steering Group to prepare the plan, and to manage public consultation. There will be a series of drop-in events early in 2016 to discuss what is most important to local people.

### How does this affect me?

They are seeking input from everyone to identify what the plan needs to consider. The consultation will start with drop-in events, which will be held throughout the Plan Area, covering Berwick, Spittal & Tweedmouth. Comments and suggestions can also be provided through their website – [www.berwickplan.co.uk](http://www.berwickplan.co.uk)

Neighbourhood planning enables people to play a much stronger role in shaping the future of the areas where they live and work. This is your chance to set out a positive vision for how you want your community to develop over the next ten to fifteen years. You can contribute to planning policies that will help shape the future that you want to see.

The Spittal drop In Sessions will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> February in the Berwick United Reform Church (St Pauls) from 6 pm to 7.30 pm. So, come to the session and let them know your views.

### ‘TIDAL’

In July of last year, and as part of the Berwick 900 anniversary, a dance project took place on the Promenade in Spittal. Tidal celebrated the sea: the tides, the waves, its power and its beauty. It was performed by local people and accompanied by newly commissioned music and costumes. The piece was the brainchild of Chloë Smith, a choreographer and dancer based in Tweedmouth.

Chloë was overwhelmed by the number of people who came to watch, by the kind words from members of the audience, by the hours of rehearsals put in by the dancers and by the number of people who encouraged and supported her along the way. A video of Tidal is now available online and can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/149595452>

### DID YOU KNOW?

Warmer, Wealthier Berwick is now up and running. The project is able to help any resident in the Berwick area with energy related issues. This includes tariff advice, advocacy, debt management advice, how to improve the energy performance of homes, accessing funding for installation and other improvements and accessing free boiler replacements for those who qualify. It is a free service available to all residents. Contact Derek Russell for more information at [drussell@berwicktrust.org.uk](mailto:drussell@berwicktrust.org.uk).

### And finally....

1. Do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?
2. Why did you just try singing the two songs above?

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