

SCAG AGM marks three years of campaigning for the community.

Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group's annual general meeting, on 14 October, marks three years of campaigning since the group was established in August 2006. The group was initially founded to fight Kirklees Council's proposals for meeting central government housing targets, which called for substantial development in Skelmanthorpe.

A secondary aim was to fight for improvements to the village that will protect or enhance the quality of life for the people who live here.

Kirklees development proposals have been rejected.

Over the past three years Kirklees has circulated two consultation documents setting out options for housing development in Skelmanthorpe. The first in 2006 had one option to build 14,000 houses, effectively turning Skelmanthorpe into a town. All the options in this first LDF document would have been detrimental to Skelmanthorpe.

SCAG helped to galvanise opposition from local people who overwhelmingly rejected the proposals. As a result of the negative responses to the initial LDF options the plan was withdrawn for further consideration. In the published consultation report it is clear that there were more responses from the people of Skelmanthorpe than from any other area.

In February of this year Kirklees produced a second set of options, which once again included proposals for substantial development in Skelmanthorpe. One option would have more than doubled the size of the village, while the others would all have resulted in a 30% increase in the size of the village.

SCAG set out to fight these plans through leafleting every home in the village to draw attention to the plans and followed this with a public meeting on 6 May, which was attended by some 200 people. Throughout this campaign SCAG worked in conjunction with SOS (Save our Scissett), KORS and Denby Parish Community Action Group. Once again the people of Skelmanthorpe responded by rejecting the Council's proposals.

As part of the campaign SCAG forged links with other action groups from Slaithwaite, Fixby, Linthwaite, Holmfirth, Honley and Golcar who were also actively fighting the proposals. As a result of the negative reaction of the people who responded to the consultation document Kirklees again withdrew their proposals.

The fight isn't over of course, because at some point Kirklees will have to make some firm proposals for meeting central government house building targets. SCAG intends to be ready to oppose any proposals that could damage the quality of life in Skelmanthorpe. The alliance with the other groups means we are now in a much stronger position to get our voice heard.

Other SCAG projects.

School crossing.

SCAG played an active part in a campaign for a school crossing on Commercial Road. The original request for a crossing had been rejected by the Council but, after a long campaign they agreed to build the crossing in 2009. So far no action appears to have been taken to begin to implement the agreement and SCAG is following up the issue with the department concerned.

Flooding at Parkgate.

SCAG continues to campaign for the bridge at Parkgate to be dredged clear of debris on an annual basis to help reduce the flood risk to residents in this area.

Poor road surfaces.

SCAG continues to campaign for repairs to local roads and has been successful in getting many potholes filled over recent months. We continue to press Kirklees to re-surface Station Road and Park Lane.

Wood Street Junction.

SCAG has campaigned to make this dangerous junction safer. KMC have agreed to explore options for improving sight lines at this junction.

Village marker stones.

SCAG has campaigned for marker stones to be set up at the entrances to the village. Denby Dale Area Committee has worked hard on our behalf and has now agreed to take over responsibility for this project.

Parking at Shelley college.

SCAG has been in contact with local police about the problems associated with students parking their cars on the road near Shelley College, creating a safety hazard. SCAG would like to see a greater provision of off road parking and roadside parking restricted to the side away from the school.

Liaison with community police officers.

SCAG has regular meetings with the local community police officers to try to direct attention to specific problems reported by members of the community. Anti social behaviour by groups of young people is the most frequent cause of concern amongst the public.

Thanks to all the people who have given us help and support.

SCAG would like to thank all the people who have supported us over the past three years and hope we can count on your continued support in the years ahead.

