



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2020/21**

**Welcome to the Town Council's Annual Report for 2020/21**

**This report gives information about the Town Council, the money it spends and the activities it carries out and also includes reports from Council representatives on voluntary organisations in the town.**

**A complete list of all Town Councillors is included on the next page of the report, where you will also find details of how to contact them.**

**Vivien Little  
Town Clerk  
April 2021**

## Contact Details

### YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS DIRECT OR VIA

The Council Offices  
50 Main Street  
Keswick  
Cumbria  
CA12 5JS

Telephone: 017687 73607

Website: [www.keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk)

E-mail: [office@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk)

The offices are normally open as follows: -

Monday to Friday  
9.30am –1.00pm

<b>Cllr Alexandra Boardman</b>	3 Heather Garth Keswick, CA12 5JW	077100 79967
<b>Cllr David S Burn</b>		07859 140 291
<b>Cllr Markus Campbell - Savours</b>	19 Springs Road, Keswick, CA12 4AQ	07733 330593
<b>Cllr Allan D Daniels</b>	31 Lakehead Court, Keswick, CA12 5EU	017687 44531
<b>Cllr Alan Dunn</b>	St. Johns House, St. John Street, Keswick, CA12 5AP	077125 91469
<b>Cllr Steve Harwood</b>	3 Browfoot, Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4LQ	017687 80708
<b>Cllr Sally Lansbury</b>	The Grange, Manor Brow, Keswick, CA12 4BA	078779 71609
<b>Cllr Tony Lywood</b>	Shu-Le-Crow, 7 Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4HF	077898 86015
<b>Cllr Duncan Miller</b>	Linthwaite, Manor Brow, Keswick CA12 4AP	017687 72295
<b>Cllr Adam Paxon</b>	Toll Bar Cottage, Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4JR	07989 386599
<b>Cllr Peter Terry</b>	High Cross, Chestnut Hill, Keswick, CA12 4LR	07802 450230
<b>Cllr Paul Titley</b>	32 Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4HA	078022 11496

## THE COUNCIL

The Town Council consists of 12 Councillors who receive no remuneration. They are appointed through election or co-option and can serve for a period of up to four years before having to be re-elected. The Town Council is the sole trustee for both Hope and Fitz Parks and the Townsfield Charitable Trusts.

The Council employs one full time and two part time members of staff (in addition to five gardening and maintenance staff employed in Keswick Parks):

Ms Vivien Little, Town Clerk

Mrs Catherine Parker, Responsible Financial Officer

Miss Ania Mlynczak, Administration & Finance Assistant

The Council meets 12 times per year, on the third Thursday of each month, and holds its Annual Meeting during May. It also meets separately in its capacity as Trustee of the Hope Park, Fitz Park and Townsfield Charitable Trusts 6 times per year with an Annual Trust meeting, also during May. All meetings are advertised on the Council's website [www.keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk) and on the noticeboard situated at the front of the Council offices. A copy of the agenda and reports for each Council meeting can also be found on the website and at Keswick Library.

The public are welcome to attend meetings and to ask questions or make comments during the public forum. Because of pandemic restrictions, meetings have been taking place using the Zoom platform, which members of the public are welcome to attend. Once pandemic restrictions have been eased, meetings will take place at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber on the first floor of 50 Main Street, Keswick.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020-21

### Councillor Paul Titley – Town Mayor

I think we can all hope that the past year remains a unique one. It has been a year when the usual Keswick landmark events did not happen, and our cultural entertainment was severely curtailed. The Theatre By The Lake is still closed and the Cinema will hopefully be reborn in the summer with a second screen. Fun became more difficult to find but new sources did emerge including the Sunflower height competition, the roof top singing in Windebrowe Avenue and a slew of photographers recording the strangeness of it all. Covid-19 became the topic of conversation and the cause of outpourings of goodwill with a host of street wardens marshalling volunteers to ensure that no one was left behind regarding information, shopping, prescriptions, or care. We were thankful that almost 30 shops and businesses were able to stay open.

We can see the glimmer of a post Covid future with the vaccination program in full swing. The town has lost some businesses, but it has not been a totally gloomy picture. Some have gone on-line; others have introduced new services, and a few have flourished, and as I write four new ones are about to open. This picture is probably not shared across the country and is due to Keswick's enduring popularity. However, that became a two-edged sword last summer when the crowds returned with the accompanying anxiety of residents. There was no peak in recorded cases during the summer months despite the throng of visitors. We had to get used to different ways of shopping, with queues, knowing what two metres looks like, and wearing masks. The market became a human roundabout because of the circulatory system – I think we all got used to that quite quickly. I was able to hear some curious explanations for the pandemic while working as a market marshal – Covid was dreamt up by the investors in Zoom to increase their profits, or Covid was the result of two research teams meeting, joining Covid and 19 together!

The almost total prevention of overseas holidays created the 'staycation'. So, we met many new visitors who had not been to the Lakes before. Unfortunately, a few had no idea and became a real 'Pain in the Park'. The emotional pressures during lockdowns probably explains the number of short-tempered visitors that local shop and café staff had to handle.

Many of us have become zoom-experts. All council meetings and sub committees have been run via zoom. The phrase 'you are still on mute' remains well used. The initial hesitation in using zoom (The Chinese might be watching) was answered by all meetings being public so it did not really matter who was watching. The opportunity for technology to bite back became obvious recently when some local council zoom recordings revealed their inner tensions. St John's Church services also moved to zoom and enabled many of the congregation (some who have been shielding for months) to join in prayer.

It required government legislation to allow council meeting to move online but it did not stop the workings of the council. Newton's third law of motion tells us that every

action has an equal and opposite reaction. The same applies to council motions. The one-way system in St Johns Street, the Premier Inn, the Wetherspoons beer garden, the National Park Sustainably Charge.

Covid did not sweep all projects aside. In December five years after the destruction of Storm Desmond the Keswick to Threlkeld Trail was reopened. Many remain disappointed that the route was tarmacked but it has become immensely popular and will be even more so in the forthcoming second staycation summer. The risk of flooding has not gone away although the flood risk in the Penrith Road area has been very much reduced by the scheme involving the new pond in Springs Road and the underground pumps under the road. The construction did stretch our patience in closing the main artery into Keswick for so many months after lockdown had been relaxed.

The usual duties of the Mayor have been different this past year. All the civic church services were cancelled, most of the hosting of official visits gone, representing Keswick at official functions gone. I was therefore able to repurpose the mayoral grant to provide several local organisations with some cash boosts. My most formal duty of laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday was thankfully retained.

We will probably never forget the past year, and the pandemic is still not behind us. Some of us have been ill, some have lost friends and relatives and been denied the means of mourning them. Meeting friends has been difficult or impossible. But compared with having to cope with this living on the tenth floor of a block of flats in a concrete jungle we do have a lot to be grateful for. Keswick is still a great place to live.

## **PARKS TRUST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020-21**

### **Councillor Adam Paxon**

Well, we have reached that time of year again when not only do I as chairman sit down to write the Trust report, but the parks once again begin to flourish.

Work commitments have kept me exceptionally busy of late but as I wander through Fitz this evening I marvel at shoots and buds beginning to unfurl, the Greta babbling quietly by, cricket training ensues while a match gets under way on the football field. Fitz is quiet otherwise, just locals walking their dogs, jogging, cycling and taking the evening air.

It has been a very unusual year and perhaps a year when even more than normal the parks have provided a much cherished recreational space for residents, who may have felt that the parks are theirs in the absence of visitors. This will change soon obviously as lockdown curbs are eased and we will soon be awash with tourists again. Our parks are ready to welcome them!

In the past year we have absorbed the lessened income from Hope Leisure, our tenant at Hope Park, as well as reduced events and car park income at Fitz. Even

with this limitation Christine has managed to rejuvenate the bridge at Hope and address the potting shed roof. The sundial has been replaced along with the clock in Hope, both with contributions and expertise from people of the town. Keswickians are rightly proud of their parks, and their contributions are invaluable be they financial as here or in contributions towards upkeep as with the sports clubs. We as Trustees are, as ever, indebted to the sports clubs for the contribution they make to Fitz. Christine and the parks staff have so much to do and work so hard in all weathers, but the parks simply would not seem so resplendent were it not for the workload taken on by the Football, Cricket and Athletics, Bowls and Tennis clubs.

I am so happy to see the children's playground in use again. This is such a fantastic resource and again is very much cherished by those that are raising their families here as was evident in their displays of frustration when we had to close it earlier this year due to concerns over the safety of users and staff.

I would like to thank Christine and Matt and all parks' staff, Lynda, until very recently and now Vivien, Catherine and Ania in the office and all Trustees for their contributions. I had better extend a special thank you to Duncan too for his support, assistance and insight throughout. It is a pleasure to be involved in the parks and I look forward to what the forthcoming year will bring.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Catherine Parker – Responsible Financial Officer

### GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
General Administration (inc salaries)	72,069
Mayors Allowance	2,000
Grants awarded	16,218
Christmas Lights	25,858
War Memorial	1,526
Townfield	1,450
Open Spaces	750
Fitz Park	152,719
Floral Displays	300
Town Events inc Scruffs	3,295
Allotments	845
Advertising	193
Audit fee/Accounts preparation	30
Promotional Gifts	0
Contingency sum	2,865
Annual Parish Meeting	0
Professional Advice	0
Event Banner Expenditure	0
CCTV Annual Maintenance	141
<b>Total</b>	<b>280,259</b>

<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
Precept and grants from Allerdale BC	270,641
Grant to Fitz Park (ABC)	20,000
Interest	0
Rent – Walker Park	12,267
Event banner advertising space	733
Allotment income	945
Townfield Interest/Wall Repairs	316
Keswick Events contributions	0
Annual Grants Returned	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>305,102</b>

***NB: Figures quoted are subject to prepayment/accruals adjustments and audit.***

## GRANTS

Each year the Town Council makes financial contributions to local organisations which provide valuable services that bring benefit to the local community. Grants were made to the following organisations during 2020/21:

Citizens Advice Allerdale	500
Great North Air Ambulance	500
KCERP	3000
Keswick in Bloom	2500
Keswick & District Community First Responders	120
1 <sup>st</sup> Keswick Scouts Group	2500
Keswick Senior Citizens Club	2000
Keswick Voluntary Car Service	375
Keswick Youth Services	1723
Theatre by the Lake	3000
<b>Total</b>	<b>16218</b>

## **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Council appoints members as representatives on various outside bodies. This helps to ensure good working relationships with local organisations. The following reports have been submitted by the nominated representatives.

### **THE BATTERSBY CHARITY**

#### **Council Representative – Councillor Tony Lywood**

No report submitted.

### **KESWICK IN BLOOM**

#### **Council Representative – Councillor Peter Terry**

2020 – As would be expected the pandemic had a major influence on the group's activities. Things started well, the AGM was held in January Jenny Forbes was elected as the Chair, Tricia Horner the Secretary & Tom Rennie the Treasurer. In January 500 English bluebells and 500 snow drops were planted on Lake Road whilst in February pruning was completed on beech trees behind the Keswick bed, Chestnut Hill; the Cherry tree at Lake Road was pruned and the Penrith Road hedge was cut. However then the lockdown reared its ugly head and things somewhat slowed down or indeed stopped. However in early March the group took a risk and ordered 900 begonias for the Keswick bed.

April and May were particularly dry and town planters suffered as there were no shops open hence nobody to do the watering. Sadly the company carrying out watering under contract to the Group ceased trading in 2019 and despite efforts to get another contractor this proved fruitless, the only company that tendered was deemed to be far too expensive. Consequently all hanging baskets and flower towers were removed and replaced by the low level planters, which, socially aware tradesmen in the town, water as and when required. The end of lockdown and slowly reverting to an almost normal situation in the summer did allow socially distanced planting and maintenance. Thankfully for the plants, the weather reverted to normal and artificial watering was not necessary. Later in the year both bulbs & wallflowers were successfully planted. All in all, despite the covid-19 restrictions the Group continued to operate and all planting and intended maintenance was completed. The Group are to be commended on their enthusiasm and efforts in what was a particularly challenging year.

2021 – The pandemic is still with us but there is an optimism which cannot be said for the same time last year. Orders have been made for this year's summer bedding plants and work has begun, bearing in mind social distancing rules, on Lake Road.

Because of the problem of watering, planters with water reservoirs have been obtained and by using peat free compost and using more perennial plants and planting for wildlife it is hoped that they will be a sustainable asset. On this subject the Group has started to investigate the management for wildlife and flowers of

Keswick's green spaces. Elizabeth Barraclough is now driving that initiative with the full support of Keswick in Bloom.

It is hoped that the Group will continue to work with the Parks and the Town Council with a thought that at some point in the future Keswick might once again enter the Cumbria in Bloom competition. Last year it was planned to enter the work done at Lake Road in the "It's Your Neighbourhood" awards but of course those were all cancelled. It is however hoped to submit an entry this year.

Even with the uncertainties presented by the pandemic, the Group are as enthusiastic as ever and progressing well with their plans for 2021. There are all to be commended as the Town would be a poorer place without the efforts and work. I am delighted to be associated with Keswick in Bloom.

**KESWICK COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP**  
**Council Representative – Councillor Sally Lansbury**

Since our last report in October 2019 Keswick Emergency Community Recovery Partnership (KCERP) has had several changes. There is now a new Project Manager in place Kimberley Ward– appointed October 2020 following a handover with the outgoing Project Manager, Heather Askew.

Over the last twelve months KCERP has achieved the following;

Taken a lead role in the community response to Covid 19, recruiting volunteers to carry out a street warden scheme which helped vulnerable members of the community who were shielding or self- isolating with tasks such as shopping, picking up prescriptions, dog walking and a befriending scheme. KCERP is currently looking at how this scheme can develop through the next stage of lockdown and continue to support the community. The Zone Co-ordinators and street wardens are still in place and responding quickly to any requests for assistance.

Covid 19 has made flood response training exercises much harder to carry out in person, but over the next six months there are online training sessions planned, a radio training session and plans for the Project Manager to attend Cockermouth's flood response day to enable us to confidently carry out this training in Keswick in 2022.

The Partnership is grateful for the support of Keswick Town Council, particularly the support of Lynda Walker and Sally Lansbury in their roles as Trustees and the use of the council chamber in the event of an emergency.

The financial support given is essential for the ongoing maintenance of the critical voluntary response.

**KESWICK AND DISTRICT FAIR TRADE COMMITTEE**  
**Council Representative – Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours**

No report submitted.

**KESWICK FLOOD ACTION GROUP**  
**Council Representative – Paul Titley**

KFAG continues to fight the good fight on behalf of Keswick to protect residents and property from the worst the rain can throw at us. Keswick has been flooded at least 20 times in the past 200 years and there seems to be no sign that that frequency is slowing down. The group started in 2005 following the flood that year to apply pressure for increased flood defence measures and to help the community reduce the risk of further flooding in the future. The group includes hydrology consultants providing expert opinion on proposals and deficiencies from other authorities. The summer of 2020 saw the culmination of years of effort to have the Penrith Road project completed. This comprises the storage pond in Springs Road and the underground pumps in Penrith Road. It should go a long way to prevent the regular accumulation of flood water that ruins so many homes in that area of the town. We have experienced a few heavy rains since installation and there has been no sign of flooding in Penrith Road. However only the recent observation that the Springs Road pond outlet was blocked and action by KFAG prevented a watery disaster.

Flooding is not only caused by raging rivers and streams but by poorly designed drainage systems. In Calvert Way the drainage pipes are regularly overwhelmed. The various authorities and developers all agree that the problem exists and its solution, but that has not stopped an administrative pass-the-parcel from preventing the sensible remediation it needs. KFAG has helped insert some action into the debate and hopefully the needed works will be completed in the next few months.

KFAG attended an ABC planning meeting regarding a new housing development at Low Seaton. Having the fresh experience of Calvert Way KFAG described the problems inherent in the design of the Low Seaton development. Suffice it to say the expertise of KFAG was not matched by the understanding of the planning group and the warnings provided by KFAG were ignored.

The elephant in the room is still Thirlmere. Keswick only floods when Thirlmere overflows (however the reverse is not so; Thirlmere can overflow with no effect on Keswick). However, it would seem sensible to manage Thirlmere at a level so that it can accommodate storm water. KFAG launched the KFAG Memorandum to that effect describing the three actions required to give Keswick the best chance of reducing flood risk. The memorandum has the support of KTC and ABC. The experience at Toddbrook Reservoir in 2019 was still not enough to have central government change its policy to make water storage owners have responsibility for flood mediation. KFAG continues to campaign for increased releases from Thirlmere to create storm storage space. There has been a small increase in such releases but the regular incidences of overflowing are a clear indication that those releases are not sufficient.

If the Greta was a friendly dog with the occasional mad spell when it bites people you would not be satisfied to learn that the owner had replaced the wafer thin string used as a lead with a two-ply version of the same string. The Greta can still bite and the work of K FAG is not over.

### **KESWICK MINISTRIES TOWN LIAISON MEETINGS**

**Council Representatives – Councillor Adam Paxon and Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours (substitute Councillor Duncan Miller)**

No report submitted.

### **KESWICK TOURISM ASSOCIATION**

**Council Representative – Councillor Alan Dunn**

The Keswick Tourism Association is a membership organisation that promotes its members and Keswick as a year-round Tourism Destination. It is based upstairs at the Town hall and employs two people, Vanessa Metcalfe (Tourism Manager) and Karen Mullarkey (Tourism Officer).

2020 was a difficult year for KTA and its members. The Covid crisis meant that the majority of KTA's members were closed for two thirds of the year and outside of lockdown, many operated at greatly reduced capacity and will do so again once they are permitted to open as this current lockdown eases. Government support continues to be welcomed although not all have benefitted from this. Many businesses adapted during the 3 lockdowns and we have not been made aware of any members that have closed as a direct result of Covid. Accommodation bookings, particularly for self-catering, are looking positive and there is a great deal of optimism from membership.

The Come Back To Keswick Campaign, that ran following the first lockdown, was hugely successful and received many positive responses. The reach was 196,115 with engagement of 23,848. KTA continue to promote the Keswick Guide and as we begin to come out of lockdown, will be undertaking a Staycation campaign which will visually demonstrate the wide range of reasons to visit Keswick. Every part of the country will be hoping to benefit from an increase in domestic tourism and it is vital that we don't just assume people will come to Keswick rather than somewhere else in the UK. A new promotional video, created using funds from United Utilities, will be launched in the next few weeks.

KTA were delighted that the majority of members (92%) renewed their membership in September.

Early this month the refreshed and updated website was launched. This will give a dedicated area for member information to be shared and allow content to be created and displayed in a more user friendly and visually appealing way. The first 3 months of the year has seen 75,000 people visit the site across 198,000 sessions,

with 344,000 page views. KTA are incredibly grateful to Cumbria Growth Hub for the grant funding that coverage part of the cost.

The 2021 Guide was launched in December and to date Over 4,000 copies have been distributed by post via either website requests or an external marketing campaign.

During February, KTA took part in a virtual Lake District Travel Showcase. 13 appointments were made by group travel trade agents covering both the domestic and international markets. It was clear that there is a strong appetite to get back to organised group travel packages, all be it with smaller numbers and more focus on family groups initially. Many had never heard of Keswick before and were keen to learn what we have to offer in terms of accommodation and attractions.

A Strategy Sub-Group has been formed and have begun the process of creating a 5-year plan. Part of the plan will include increasing membership numbers, particularly in the retail and food and drink sectors. As mentioned in the December report, there a now no outdoor clothing members at all. Visitors have been actively contacting us for information about food and drink business, when they will open, which pubs have outdoor seating, etc, however, we can only share information about member businesses which doesn't give the full picture.

#### **KESWICK YOUTH CENTRE**

**Council Representative – Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours**

No report submitted.

#### **ALLERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Ward Representatives – Councillors Markus Campbell-Savours, Allan Daniels and Sally Lansbury**

No report submitted.

#### **CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Ward Representative – Councillor Tony Lywood**

No report submitted.

#### **COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**

**Vivien Little – Town Clerk**

This year has been unlike any other, and Keswick Town Council has had to adapt quickly to new ways of working though pandemic life. Following the introduction of the first lockdown at the end of March 2020, the Council moved its meetings to the Zoom platform in April 2020, and has continued to meet monthly virtually since then.

Meetings attract continuing public attendance, even held virtually. Useful presentations take place before many meetings and subjects this year have included:

Keswick Mountain Festival Event  
Census Engagement  
Keswick Ministries

These help to ensure that Councillors are well informed on issues of local importance and concern. Regular updates from Borough and County Councillors at meetings also ensure good communication.

The Town Council makes most of its decisions at the monthly meeting – there are only two standing committees which cover Events and Staffing.

The Events Committee meets regularly and ‘masterminds’ the annual Keswick Festival in June and the Christmas Lights Switch On in November. A core of committed Councillors supported by representatives of other organisations and businesses in the town work hard to put on these regular events, together with other ad hoc events which may arise. Last year all events were put on hold due to varying degrees of lockdown, and while they may still be limited this year, it is hoped that the Keswick Festival will happen in some form in late summer, and plans are moving ahead for the Christmas Lights Switch-On in November.

Planning continues to be a major part of the Council’s remit – as a statutory consultee the Town Council is asked to comment on all planning applications which affect the parish. A small group of Councillors (the Planning Group) ensure that all members of the Council are fully informed on applications which come before them for comment, giving their free time to research these. This has now also been supplemented by Allerdale Borough Council consulting the Town Council on Licensing Applications, and due to timescales involved, the members of the Planning Group have delegated powers to make decisions in regard to Licensing Applications, which are then reported back to all Councillors.

Working groups have been set up for a number of topics. A Climate Change working group has been established, along with a Visitor Management group, which works closely with the Lake District National Park Authority, Allerdale Borough Council, as well as a representative from Threlkeld Parish Council to ensure that the needs of both residents as well as visitors are being met.

The Council continues to look after the War Memorial on Penrith Road.

The Town Council is the sole trustee of Keswick parks with all Councillors meeting in their ‘trustee’ role every two months. Town Council staff also support Keswick Parks with Fitz Park and Hope Park having their own separate budgets. It has been an understandably difficult year for both parks, with high visitor numbers through the summer but reduced income, but with the predicted increase in numbers expected this summer with the rise of the ‘staycation’ holiday, this should give them a chance to build up their reserves again.

One of the biggest changes to Keswick Town Council came in March this year, with the retirement of the long serving clerk Lynda Walker, after 13 years of service to

Keswick and a new clerk, Vivien Little taking over. I am sure the whole of Keswick would join me in wishing Lynda well in her retirement.