



KESWICK TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2010/11

Welcome to the Annual Report 2010/11

This report is intended to show how the Town Council spends its time and money and details some of the activities that have taken place throughout the year. It 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.

**Lynda Walker
Town Clerk
April 2011**

Contact Details

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS DIRECT OR VIA

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The offices are normally open as follows: -

Monday & Friday
9.30am – 12.30pm & 1.00pm – 4.00pm
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30am – 12.30pm

Cllr Miss E D Barraclough	Windrush, Rogerfield, Keswick CA12 4BN	017687 72771
Cllr A B Dunn	St Johns House, 13 St Johns Street, Keswick CA12 5AP	017687 72128
Cllr D J Etherden	Orchard Cottage, Thornthwaite CA12 5SG	017687 78277
Cllr I M Hall	Orchard House, Applethwaite CA12 4PA	017687 73175
Cllr R M Jordan	Braeside, The Heads, Keswick CA12 5ER	017687 71249
Cllr D Kemp	1 Vicarage Hill, Keswick CA12 5QB	017687 73490
Cllr A Lysser	Apartment 2, Gatesgarth, Braithwaite CA12 5RY	017687 78833
Cllr D Miller	Linthwaite, Manor Brow, Keswick CA12 4AP	017687 72295
Cllr M Pugmire	6 Brandlehow Crescent, Keswick CA12 4JE	017687 73409
Cllr R Purkiss	Hope House, Station Road, Keswick CA12 4ND	017687 75127
Cllr D Robinson	Troutdale View, 51 The Headlands, Keswick CA12 5EH	017687 73465
Cllr Mrs L Taylor	21 Stanger Street, Keswick CA12 5JU	017687 72034

THE COUNCIL

The Town Council consists of 12 voluntary Councillors. 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 sole trustee for Keswick Parks Charitable Trusts (Hope Park, Fitz Park and Townsfield) and all Councillors are therefore involved in management of these areas.

The Council employs two members of staff who also carry out work for the Charitable Trusts:

Mrs Lynda Walker, Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
Miss Catherine Howe, Administration and Finance Officer

The Council meets 12 times per year normally 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 and on the noticeboard situated at the front of the Council offices.

The public are welcome to attend meetings and to ask questions or make comments during the public participation item.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010-11

Councillor Martin Pugmire – Town Mayor

The last year in Keswick began with appalling events. The town was still in the recovery phase from the November 2009 floods, with much distress, stress, and a vast amount of consequential work on human and physical damage, when we were struck by the body blow of the Braithwaite coach tragedy, with its own profound traumas and grief, followed in its turn by the West Cumbria gun tragedy. Then of course, as a direct result of the floods, we were threatened with the permanent loss of Ravensfield Retirement Home, which had been temporarily closed since the flood.

The Council has, I hope, been felt to respond adequately to these events. I would especially want to draw attention to the mass of meetings relating to flood recovery and preparation of an Emergency Plan. This work began under my predecessor: I have simply pushed it on. When we finally lost the Ravensfield battle, after sterling work by councillors and others, we also held meetings with the County Adult Social Services to try to ensure that provision in Keswick reflected the additional funding available due to the savings created by not running Ravensfield.

Later in the year, the terrible weather in November seems to have done very severe damage to road surfaces, but at least the winter was dry.

The big positive event of the spring period was of course the success of the Environment Agency's bid for money for our flood defences. I do hope it is appreciated that it is very unlikely that we would have got this money were it not for the work of the Flood Action Group, who have become a national model of how it should be done. I should perhaps declare an interest since I have the honour to sit on their committee, after initially being asked to attend on behalf of the Council. It seems likely that this work will be expedited, being completed in one financial year, though at this moment plans are not entirely finalised. On a lesser level, but still very hearteningly, it now seems that a positive outcome for the town's museum will result from its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, though no official announcement has at this moment been made by the sole trustee, Allerdale Borough Council, or by the HLF.

The Council's staff have worked this year under immense, and at times almost intolerable pressure, initially as a result of the town's misfortunes and very recently as a result of some comment, at times inexcusable in tone, relating to parks issues. I hope that this will rapidly subside, since we have in Lynda Walker and Catherine Howe two quite exceptional executive officers who it has been a privilege to work with.

CHARITABLE TRUST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2010-11

Councillor Ian Hall – Trust Chairman

This has been a year of great achievement for the Parks Trusts, with a lot of new investment and a very real step forward in our provision both for general enjoyment of the parks, and also, very importantly, in our provision of sustainable income to maintain new and existing attractions. I will report briefly on the attractions first.

The Children's Play Area

This came online in April 2010, and has been a great success, attracting, as intended, children from surrounding parishes, visiting children, and of course many Keswick children. All this activity does lead to a pretty heavy maintenance schedule, and keeps Fitz Park staff busy mending, maintaining and keeping the area clean and tidy, which they have done well indeed. Sustainability is clearly going to be a major issue, as it will be with the Community Sports Area, and requires a well provided sinking fund.

The Community Sports Area.

This took a great deal of effort in negotiation, and a long time in realisation, but we do now have an area to be proud of, that is being well-used by local teenagers and some older folk. I am delighted Carlisle Leisure have taken on the day to day management, as they bring a level of professionalism we would have been hard put to find elsewhere. Like the children's playground, it will be very well used, and will need planned maintenance and a sinking fund to guarantee its sustainability. Again, the duty of daily maintenance and cleaning up falls on our Fitz Park staff, a duty they are discharging well. Graffiti has been a minor problem, but we hope to be able to maintain our 'open gates' policy so that any group of youngsters can use it for free when it is not pre-booked. I would call on them to police this themselves, in order to preserve that free use.

The Car Park.

This is still a work in progress but I am confident that when complete it will make both a significant contribution to the costs of running Fitz Park and be a useful addition to the various sports groups who use Fitz and currently find parking difficult and expensive. We are enormously indebted to BIDS for the grant of £80,000 towards the cost of making the car park, without which I doubt we could have raised the investment needed.

The Futures Group have been in consultation with the Environment Agency and Volker Stevin, the engineers who will put the flood defences in place, over the need to make sure work on the new bund and new car park at Hospital Field go hand in hand, and I can report that the consensus is that the road into the car park and the path along the riverside should each have a floodgate incorporated, rather than have to be taken over the considerable height of the new bund. We are still in negotiation over some drainage issues, and the timing of the various operations.

The possible franchise of games and catering facilities in the parks.

At the time of writing the future of this venture is still unknown, but I need to report that it has taken an enormous amount of both Trustees' and the Clerk's time, and I

am deeply grateful to all concerned for that commitment. If the franchising does go ahead it will have a doubly beneficial effect for the parks. Firstly it will give a guaranteed income sufficient to cover the running costs at Hope Park and to contribute to a sinking fund for the maintenance issues mentioned above. And secondly it will provide much needed investment in both parks, but principally in Hope, which we could not hope to achieve alone. This would, among other benefits, provide a café which would be a boon to visitors and also another source of sustainable income once the investment costs have been recouped. Whilst its future is undecided, there seems little point in commenting further, except to acknowledge that we misjudged how interested Keswick people would be in this venture, and have had an ongoing problem trying to communicate the considerable benefits. I sincerely hope that by the time this report is public this episode will be behind us.

The state of the Parks.

As usual, at this time of year, I would like to pay tribute to James and his staff for the beautiful state of both Fitz and Hope Parks. It is a joy to the soul to stroll through either and a reminder that whatever the works of man the works of nature, in this case aided by man, can pour a balm on the deepest of troubles. Of course they are costly, but the return to so many visitors and locals alike is well worth the expense both in money and in time spent. This beauty and the pleasure they give remains our *raison d'être* as trustees of the parks; let us not lose sight of it whatever the provocation.

Retiring Trustees.

Four Trustees are standing down this year, and I would like to thank them for all their work these last four years. Alan Dunn has been a solid support in all that we have done and a valuable sounding board on public opinion and perceptions, particularly with his connections to the Cricket Club. Roger Purkiss was the first to put forward the idea of a car park, and the revenue we will eventually draw from that will be, in part, his legacy. Lorraine Taylor has worked tirelessly on all our projects and as a member of the Futures Group, in particular over the Community Sports Area and was deputy chair for a couple of years. And Elizabeth has covered all aspects in her sixteen years on the Trust, -as chair, as champion of many areas of beautification and interest in the parks, and as a valuable and sage guide in many recent projects. Thank you to all four, you will all be missed.

Our office staff.

All the achievements noted above have placed a heavy load on our office staff: Lynda Walker, our clerk, and Catherine Howe, her assistant, and I would particularly like to thank them for the unfailing helpfulness they have shown throughout the year, and their professionalism in so many different spheres. Charity law, grant applications, the complexities of franchising, staff relations, negotiations with contractors, the implications of flood defence and flood recovery and so many other aspects of running these parks have all been dealt with good grace and competence. I am extremely grateful.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs Lynda Walker - Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

At the time of writing this report the Accounts for the year end have not yet been finalised nor audited. I can, therefore, only make some general observations as per the fourth quarter budget comparisons against actual spend to 31 March 2011. It is to be noted that these figures will change due to further invoicing, VAT calculations and accruals.

There is every indication that there will be a surplus in the region of £15,000 on the year, mainly due to underspend on salaries and a less than expected deficit on Fitz Park.

Income was made up of £203,497 precept (a demand made on Allerdale Borough Council for council tax). A further £5,431 was received from rental, bank interest, and charges.

Of expenditure, a significant part (approximately £41,000) was grant aided towards the running of Fitz Park (total cost in the region of £103,000). Other main expenditure was £17,547 in grant funding to community and voluntary organisations, £31,318 in salaries and administration costs (including pensions and national insurance), approximately £14,000 for Christmas lighting, £2,369 on the fireworks display, £1,860 Mayor's allowance (to offset expenditure incurred during the year in office). The remaining expenditure was made up of costs for floral displays, the war memorial, Townsfield, open spaces, audit fees, newsletters, winter gritting, and allotments expenditure. A contribution to reserves of £10,000 was also made to meet Audit Commission guidelines.

The Council started the year with £37,672 in the General Fund. The Town Project Reserve Fund (£72,598) was used to match-fund a grant of £62,000 from Sport England to provide a Multi Use Games Area at Lower Fitz Park.

Interested parties and local electors will be able to exercise their right to inspect the financial records before the annual audit takes place. The records will be made available from 6 June 2011 to 1 July 2011 for this purpose.

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 2010/11:

Keswick in Bloom	£2,750
1 st Keswick Scout Group	£1,000
Keswick Tourism Association	£1,000
Theatre by the Lake	£3,500
PARCS scheme Play sessions	£ 180
Keswick Youth Club	£1,500
Keswick Out of School Club	£ 600
Keswick Rugby Club	£3,000
Keswick Museum & Art Gallery	£2,000

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 TRUST

Council Representative – Councillor David Etherden

As there have been no meetings held during the year I currently have nothing to report.

CUMBRIA THEATRE TRUST

Council Representative – Councillor Martin Pugmire

The Theatre by the Lake, after a number of financially and artistically successful years, was hurt by bad weather this winter, and anticipates a challenging financial climate this coming year.

However, as all will be aware, the Arts Council award for the next award cycle is very heartening, involving an increase in funding. This reflects the quality of work at the Theatre, and the quality of its off-site work also. The increase especially relates to the Theatre's challenging work with young people, but certainly a vote of confidence in the standard of work and commitment at the Theatre.

DERWENTWATER FORESHORE COMMITTEE

Council Representative – Councillor Elizabeth Barraclough

The Foreshore Project was set up to improve the hard landscape by the Foreshore and to help visitors understand and enjoy the area as an entrance to the Borrowdale Valley. The project always had two aspects, the physical improvements and the interpretation for visitors and local people.

The majority of the construction work has been completed but there are still one or two issues to be resolved that affect the Town Council.

Access permits

The issue that was of most concern to residents during the consultation many years ago was the need to get all vehicles off the Foreshore. This has still not been achieved partly due to misinterpretation of the legally correct highway signs and partly due to the need to have a 'permit' system before restrictions can be enforced. Highways have removed one confusing sign and have added an advisory sign, which should make clear that no traffic may go beyond the Car Park entrance without a permit.

There will be two types of permit, one for residents and their visitors, and one for groups needing to launch from the shore by the island boathouse. This second group will have instructions with the permit on access to and use of the launching

site. (The groups have been operating successfully during 2010 without a permit so there should not be a problem.)

Direction Signs

The project has improved the route to the Foreshore and the Lake but visitors still find the signing inadequate. The project is considering adding a new finger post; outside Fishers; of the standard design used throughout the Town and possibly add a finger sign to the post in the Market Square. The capital cost will be borne by the project but it clearly increases the maintenance costs that, at present, nobody is responsible for.

Underpass murals

It is hoped to install in the underpass from Lower Lake Road to Hope Park murals or possibly mosaics reflecting the good things to be found beyond the underpass. It is hoped to involve Keswick School and to have alternative designs available for comment before work commences. The underpass is the property of the County Council who have already been consulted and will be involved in the final decision.

Interpretation

Three interpretation boards will be installed just through the underpass and close to the Foreshore. Additional information for visitors will be provided and volunteers have been recruited to help extend their enjoyment and knowledge.

A series of public events is being run. In February "Keswick's Winter Week of Light" saw a lantern procession to the Lake and in September a Water Festival is planned. A schools project called "A View from Here" will also be running in 2011.

FITZ PARK SPORTS PAVILLION

Council Representative – Councillor Alan Dunn

Chairman		D. Beebe	
Secretary		P. Pridmore	
Minutes Secretary		K Richardson	
Treasurer		P. Pridmore	
Club Representatives	Cricket	K Richardson	E. Appelby
	Athletics	S. Harwood	C. Mandale
Town Council Representative		A. Dunn	

THE CLUBS

Cricket

Comprises 3 senior teams, a midweek X1 and junior teams at levels of U9, U11, U13, and U15.

An U13 girl's team will again play this season and 3 senior ladies recently gained their Level 1 coaching qualifications. The club employs a senior professional who, together with a number of senior club members who have gained their Levels 1 or 2 coaching qualifications are actively involved in the coaching of the junior section throughout the year. There is now a recently organised junior committee to help administer this thriving section of the club. County and local finals are now a regular fixture at Fitz Park.

Athletics

The club has a junior section. The pavilion is the base for numerous local races, also a number of national races-the Latrigg Race is held each year as part of the Keswick Mountain Festival. During 2010 the European Championship trial races were held in Fitz Park.

GENERAL FUNDING

Each of the remaining two user groups contributes a regular monthly amount towards the running costs and general upkeep of the facility. Monthly income of £ 200 helps pay the insurance, water, electricity and some general repairs

Bank balance at 8 February 2011 is £ 739.31

OVERALL REVIEW

The pavilion facility is now 18 years old and continues to be well utilised throughout the year by the remaining user groups and a small number of outside organisations(e.g Junior Schools cross country).

The individual clubs of the user groups continue to flourish with high membership at both senior and junior levels providing vital recreational and social opportunities for people within the area.

The clubs continue to maintain, to a high standard, a large area of the Lower Fitz Park.

Areas of conflict between the user groups are minimal due mainly to the close liaison of the club representatives.

As the building ages, areas of " wear and tear" are being assessed by a "fabric committee" and funds targeted towards renovations where required (general joinery repairs £ 309 this year).

Legal requirements continue to be a drain on club funds (electrical works alone this year have cost £846) and further expenditure of £ 2,500 is required to update the pavilion to satisfy current legislation.

The proposed extension to the kitchen and social area have been shelved for the time being as funding from the English Cricket Board has proved difficult to obtain.

In the meantime the clubs have committed themselves to improving the external appearance of the pavilion at both the front and rear. The enhancement work at the front was completed during the summer and it is planned to follow this up shortly with a screened area at the rear for refuse bins etc.

JOINT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Council Representative – Councillor Martin Jordan

The following report is an abstract from the minutes of the JMAG meeting held in January.

Information Centre Team Leader's Report

Lorna Egan presented the Team Leader's report

The group noted the following:

- Visitor numbers down 10%
- Visitors numbers in general appear down throughout the area
- Advertising space has been offered in the Moot Hall foyer – 55 letters to eating out establishments – 6 taken up
- 21 further letters recently sent to eating out establishments
- Letters sent to galleries with a take up of 3
- Posters for events/exhibitions etc are no longer free of charge

The group noted the income generated from the AdCap hub but this was covered in more detail in a separate agenda item.

The Action Plan for Income generation was being implemented with all areas to have been addressed by the end March 2011.

Adventure Capital at the Moot Hall

Lorna Egan spoke from a paper summarising progress with the Adventure Capital initiative on the first floor of the Moot Hall.

It was proposed that additional signage was required for the facility, but that limitations on space made this difficult.

It was agreed that a further review with the CT was vital and that this should take place before end January.

It was also agreed that additional providers be approached to advertise.

Oral updates of relevance to the Moot Hall

Allerdale Borough Council

No update as yet on 2011/2012 grant for Moot Hall

Keswick Tourism Association

Martin Lankester updated the Group on the following: -

- The 2011 Keswick Guide distribution is progressing well

There were no other updates that had not been covered elsewhere in the agenda.

Date of next meeting

The be agreed – suggested end April 2011

KESWICK BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Council Representative – Councillor Roger Purkiss

The Keswick Business Improvement District or BID for short was incorporated almost five years ago supported by businesses in the town who had to vote the BID into existence and it was duly established under national legislation. There are hundreds of BID's around the country but Keswick was the FIRST rural market town to be granted such status.

The aim of every BID is the same - to maintain and improve the economy of the town in which it is established. This happens by the BID levying each business (over a certain rateable value) 1% of its business rates. Unlike a tax the whole of that levy is used within the town by a Board of Directors constituted of local businessmen and women. Of the total levy some 60% comes from "outside" business such as Barclays Bank, Lloyds Bank, HSBC, Blacks, Mountain Warehouse, Boots, WH Smith and so on (not an exhaustive list). Looking at it another way approximately for every 40p put

in by local businesses 60p is put in by larger companies. The directors are volunteers and claim no expenses. There can be up to 15 directors and there are currently 12. The vote and a new board will be elected soon and notices will be sent out in good time.

The First Five Years

Major Projects

1. New Car Park. Developed in conjunction with Fitz Park Trust this will be built in the next few months on land to the rear of the hospital. It will help to avoid visitors having to drive away having failed to find parking and will provide Fitz Park Trust with a regular income stream.

2. Fitz Park Play Area. BIDS provided substantial funds to this project which has already proved a significant asset to Keswick. It adds a real plus for visitors to the town and residents alike. Usage can be seen any day of the week.

3. Christmas Lights. BIDS continues to fund the new lights (with the Town Council) and completely funds the lights in St John's St and Station St.

Festivals/Events

Keswick is becoming the Adventure Capital of England (ACE) so encouragement and partial funding has been given to:-

1. Keswick Mountain Festival. Now an annual event.
2. Puma Derwentwater Trail Race. Now part of a major regular series.
3. Commonwealth Mountain and Ultra Distance Championships. A pre Olympic sport trial.
4. Adidas Terrex Adventure Race. Fully screened on Channel 4 emphasising Keswick ACE
5. Whinlatter Duathlon. Now part of a major regular series.

Visitors and residents who prefer the easier life would have found the following supported by BIDS:-

1. Christmas Food Fair. Combined with lights switch on and now an annual fixture
2. Fitz Fest 2. Music Festival in Fitz Park.
3. Keswick Comedy Festival. Something new and featuring TV personalities.
4. Jazz Festival 2010. Brought the festival to the town centre and provided marquee in Crow Park replacing venues lost through flooding.
5. Keswick Convention. Major thrust to encourage attendees at this 130 year old event to seek out more of Keswick shops while they are here. At the start of each week of Convention a member of BIDS greeted the 3000 strong audience.

Advertising and Publications

1. "Exclusively Keswick". A shoppers guide produced and more than 60,000 copies distributed across the North of England.
2. "Keswick Mall Map". This map portrays Keswick as a shopping "mall" with many diverse businesses. 20,000 copies have been distributed.
3. "Kids Keswick". A guide to activities for young children was written and produced by Keswick parents. BIDS funded the first print run costs. The book has been well received.

4. Professional Photography. Every BIDS member received a CD containing images of Keswick that members can use in their own advertising promotions.

Sprucing Up The Town

1. New signposts. BIDS funded the new directional fingerposts.
2. Alleyways. BIDS paid for the painting and restoration of the alleyways off the town centre.
3. Disc Parking Holders. BIDS removed a major source of discontent with visitors who were being fined regularly by providing the special holders at each Disc Parking location.

The Next Term

Projects will be determined by the next Board of Directors but strong on the list could be: -

1. Public Toilets. Preliminary discussions with Allerdale Borough Council have indicated they would be willing to hand over to Keswick Town Council and terms have been discussed. BIDS would work with Town Council in fixing and finding finance to maintain these blots on the landscapes.
2. New Events. A new event each year with an aim of making at least two of the five annually sustainable. A water based event is one such possibility e.g. Regatta. Our current Festivals all attract a different group of people so how about a Fishing Festival for another group. All based on shoulder or quieter parts of the calendar and that ideally require accommodation.
3. Sustaining existing events. Look at expanding any of our existing facilities and build on what we have.
4. The new board will be seeking input from members at the earliest opportunity. The only way to ensure that the great progress made in the first term is continued is for business owners to use their vote positively.

Regrettably although BIDs won a majority in terms of number they did not win a vote for renewal by dint of rateable value. The directors regard this as a setback and will be considering the best course of action to take.

KESWICK CIVIC SOCIETY

Council Representative – Councillor Duncan Miller

The Society are pleased to announce that the Jonathan Otley Steps in King's Head Yard will be unveiled on the 4th May by Dr. Alan Smith. The refurbished steps with decorative railings and a new descriptive plaque have been financed by the Society with the help of donations from concerned local groups. The rooms, which were reached by way of the steps, were the workshop and home of a man who was once described as 'The Father of English Geology'. The Society has to be applauded for saving a little bit of Keswick's history.

The Society remains concerned that the Magistrates Court building, a prestigious building in the town centre remains empty and is in a deteriorating state.

Keswick Civic Society, following a declaration at last years AGM, will more than likely be wound-up after the Heritage Open Days in September. A sad situation but no-one has come forward to volunteer for the Committee to continue the excellent

contribution the Society has made to Keswick. If the Society does fold I would hope that I can carry forward their ethos through my Town Council work.

KESWICK IN BLOOM

Council Representative - Councillor Elizabeth Barraclough

Competitions

Keswick Town

We held our usual Town competition in August and saw many splendid gardens some of which had been completely flooded last November. This year we extended the allotments category to have special awards for the new allotments. However the entries were so good that we will have to judge them all together next year.

Cumbria in Bloom

We were runners-up behind Grange-over-Sands in the Small Town category with a Silver Gilt, and won the Allerdale Best in Borough Trophy. We will not be representing Cumbria in Britain in Bloom next year. The Cumbria entries for City and Small Town will be Whitehaven and Kirby Stephen with Grange over Sands nominated for the Coastal Town category.

The future of the Cumbria in Bloom competition is in some doubt as the County and District Councils have withdrawn some or all of the funding for running the competition, the proposal to offset the shortfall is to charge entrants significantly more.

Britain in Bloom

The stiffest competition this year was for Britain in Bloom as the representatives for Cumbria in the 'Small Town' category. The judging took place on damp day in August at the same time as a fine Beech tree was being cut down as it was deemed unsafe through disease. We were not successful in the competition despite the hard work of members of K in B, particularly our secretary, Chris Knowles, who had put in a huge amount of work. We were not helped by the problems following the floods and difficulty getting the plants we wanted.

Members

We continue to attract new members to the Keswick in Bloom group including frequent visitors who want to help with the Town.

Projects

This year has seen the results of much hard work on the area outside Hope Park, which has been cleared and then planted with Rhododendrons and Azaleas. With the help of grants from a number of organisations we have built a stone seat to finish off the bed.

A much smaller area outside St Johns church has been cleared and planted with potatoes and a flower border with help from the Scouts and the Brownies. We hope to plant fruit trees once the ground is free of weeds.

The next area that needs attention is a revamp of the bed on the bank at the bottom of Lake Road, we are considering ideas at the moment.

KESWICK SPORTS HALL USERS' GROUP

Council Representative – Councillor Denstone Kemp

The above committee no longer meets; therefore I have nothing to report.

KESWICK TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Council Representative – Councillor Duncan Miller

2011 Tourism and Keswick

Tourism across the country seems to be setting off to a 'careful 2011'. The cost of petrol certainly does seem to have an adverse effect, with weekend trips now being something to seriously consider rather than being a regular trip. Keswick is situated well to withstand the short term drop. A late Easter is making itself felt; the season should really have begun by now and it is noticeably quiet. The Royal Wedding brings the opportunity to attract visitors for longer stays and there are certainly many events happening in and around the town.

Strategy of promoting Keswick

This year our strategy is to encourage visitors to think about Keswick first and foremost when they think of the Lake District, and to look beyond South Lakeland. KTA will attend shows, both in and out of county to promote Keswick, and are placing advertising in carefully chosen publications. This will be an ongoing strategy, with several initiatives planned.

Social Networking

Facebook and Twitter accounts are now up and running, with Sarah Jones using her PR knowledge to operate both of these. KTA are seeking external advice on how to use these strategically, and training courses to members are being arranged. Many of their members, particularly the retail and attraction members, have expressed interest in attending social networking workshops.

Keswick.org

The new website has received good feedback from both members and the trade. The first aim of the website was to increase accommodation bookings, and the home page has several routes into this.

Keswick Holiday Guide

The 2011 guide is now in distribution and demand is encouraging.

TIC Points

A Business Plan has been produced for the upgrade of the town's Tourist Information Points, which is currently being considered by the Board. The proposed designs would enhance the visitor information as befits a major tourist town.

KESWICK YOUTH CLUB

Council Representative – Councillor David Etherden

Keswick Youth Club needs to redevelop their site as the existing building is now closed and unusable following the floods in 2009.

In the interim with the very kind support of Costa Coffee we are holding youth evenings at Costa Coffee on Wednesday nights.

In 2008 planning approval for redevelopment of the site to include new local housing and a new youth club was given. However the permission was granted just after the sale of Sharp Edge Gallery, which had been part of the application. This meant a new application had to be made that excludes the Sharp Edge land. This problem arose entirely because of delays caused by the Environment Agency during the original planning process. In addition the original partner Eden Housing have now withdrawn from the project citing issues of lack of availability of grant funding.

We do now have another Housing Association interested in the new development but yet again we have hit further problems as follows: -

1. United Utilities plans for new sewage works means they wish to run the main sewage pipe through land where we have permission to build new houses.
2. The Environment Agency is causing problems associated with the planned flood prevention work. Their current stance is that they will make no contribution to the costs of providing flood defence works on a permanent basis at the Youth Club but propose that they will place sandbags against the interior wall of the Youth Club and board up the windows. This is hardly a good solution for the Youth Club nor is it likely to provide an effective flood defence for the town.

The Lake District National Park has offered to Chair a meeting between the Youth Club, the Housing Association, United Utilities and the Environment Agency to try and resolve all the issues. However the Environment Agency have advised they do not believe there is any value in such a meeting at this stage.

The Youth Club Committee continues to fight for a fair deal that will see a new Youth Club emerge but it has to be said that the unhelpful and indeed arguably hostile attitude of bodies such as the Environment Agency is taking a significant toll on our volunteers.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Council Representative - Councillor Elizabeth Barraclough

Neighbourhood Forum departed from its usual form this year as during the flood recovery period Pat Ackred, the Neighbourhood Development Officer, spent almost all her time in Keswick supporting flood victims in a variety of ways. Requests for grants continued to be processed and by the end of the year normality resumed with well attended meetings.

The future of Neighbourhood Forum and the funding for small grants is under consideration; it could be subsumed in the funding allocated to each councillor for capital projects particularly if these grants could be spent on recurrent funding.

KESWICK AND DISTRICT FAIR TRADE CAMPAIGN

Council Representative – Councillor Lorraine Taylor

Keswick Fair Trade Campaign started the New Year on a high with Jo Human, one of the founder members of the group, being awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours' list for services to Fairtrade in Cumbria and to Oxfam. He went on to speak about the achievements of the Keswick campaign at the Launch of Fairtrade Fortnight at the RIBA in London and at the Fairtrade Foundation's Supporters Conference at Kings College London.

The usual round of annual fundraising events have taken place including the very successful Strawberry Tea in Borrowdale, which despite dreadful weather still raised over £800. A 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party' was held at the Theatre by the Lake to launch Fairtrade Fortnight, and was enjoyed by all who attended. The theme of Fairtrade Fortnight was the 'Big Swap', encouraging people to swap their usual brand for Fairtrade.

Keswick Fair Trade have forged a relationship with the Rotary Club of Keswick in connection with the friendship link with Choche Coffee Farmers' Cooperative in Ethiopia. In March 5 people, including our Patron, Margaret Purkiss, and John Howell from Keswick Rotary, visited Choche to lay the foundations for a micro-finance project. The purpose of the project is twofold. Its first aim is to help the poorer coffee farmers to free themselves from debt to money lenders / coffee traders, and so participate more fully in their affairs of the Cooperative and benefit from their membership (including the guaranteed minimum Fairtrade price). The second aim is to help women set up small businesses. At the time of our visit John Howell had secured a commitment of £5000, of which £4000 was from local Rotary funds and £1000 from the Campaign. To this a further £5000 of matching funds was subsequently contributed from Rotary International sources. A second visit to Choche was made in November by John and Patricia Howell and two members of the Campaign Committee, Jill and Joe Human, to see how the scheme was beginning to work, and to start to build a relationship with the Rotary Club of Jimma, whose members are responsible for overseeing the project.

KESWICK FLOOD ACTION GROUP

Council Representative – Councillor Andrew Lysser

The past year has been a very busy one for KFAG. This report summarises our activities under a number of headings

1. Environment Agency

A number of members of the committee met Lord Smith, Chairman of the EA when he visited Keswick on November 19th to discuss the need for improved defences.

We have continued to work with the EA to obtain improved flood defences for Keswick. We hosted a very successful consultation meeting at St Herbert's Centre in late 2010 when a large number of people had a chance to discuss the plans with Mike Harper the project manager and other EA staff.

At the EA's suggestion we started an ongoing appeal for funds from the community funds to increase the chances of a successful bid. Had the bid not been successful it would have been reconsidered under the new scheme, which

would have required substantial input from the community 10% of £5.7 million is £570,000 an unrealistic sum for a community of our size.

Funding of £5.7 million was announced on February 9th.

2. United Utilities

Under the Chairmanship of Lord Campbell-Savours, KFAG has worked with United Utilities to develop a scheme of management of Thirlmere, which gives a better chance of providing spare capacity particularly in the autumn and winter. UU now release water towards Thirlmere when the reservoir reaches a trigger level. The second part of the trial is to do minor engineering to allow the rate of release to be increased. The Chairman of UU has given a personal commitment to help Keswick and we feel that a cooperative approach is having a positive impact.

UU are also investing £20 million in the Keswick Sewage system, which will alleviate the problems at Elliott Park. The Elliott Park group are working closely with UU to improve the situation in the interim. An extra pump was in place over the winter and UU staff were on hand on January 15th when there was a threat of flooding.

3. Surface water problems

With the help of the National Flood Forum, a couple of multiagency meetings have been held with representatives from Cumbria CC, Allerdale BC, EA and UU to look at drainage issues, particularly in the east of Keswick

4. Flood surveys

KFAG arranged for flood surveys to be carried out to 83 households and 6 blocks of housing including St Kentigern's Close, Riverside Court and Wesley House.

These surveys were funded by Cumbria Community Foundation who also, following prolonged lobbying by KFAG provided funding for resilience measures to a large number of households.

5. Flood volunteers

The number of volunteers has now increased to 50. Thanks to the generosity of Keswick Rotary and CCF we now have high visibility waterproof suits for each volunteer and 10 more radios to supplement those we borrow from SARDA.

The group has had two training sessions.

6. Flood Bags

KFAG, with the help of Emily Thompson, Keswick Flood Recovery Officer is currently involved in the issue of emergency bags to households at risk.

7. Weathering the Storm

KFAG and the Cumbria Flood Support Centre organised a very successful exhibition called Weathering the Storm at Theatre by the Lake in August/September. This aimed to give an account of the flood in pictures but also in stories of different groups of people who were involved.

A book of the same title was also published and has sold 1100 copies to date. Cost has been covered and proceeds from remaining sales will be put towards the ongoing appeal.

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL
Ward Representative - Councillor Elizabeth Barraclough

The major issue for the County Council overall is the effect of the reduction in Government funding. The Council has initiated a voluntary redundancy scheme, which has been taken up by many officers approaching retirement age. This will mean a loss of experienced staff and inevitably we will lose some services such as our Neighbourhood Development Officer.

Adult Services

The major concern was the final closure of Ravensfield Care Home, it was held in such esteem and affection by the people of Keswick. There has been a positive effect in that Keswick has had a great deal of attention from senior managers determined to provide a better service for Keswick people. We will need to keep a watching brief on this to ensure that no Keswick people are forced to find care outside the Town.

Highways

The new paving in Main Street and Tithebarn Street was finally completed. At the same time the Market Square paving seems under attack by utility companies who need to be forced back to reinstate the paving. This, despite frequent nagging, does not seem to be happening. Some resurfacing has been done with good effect on Crosthwaite Road and Briar Rigg. We are awaiting the completion of the agreed yellow lines, which should make Brundholme Road below the Keswick Hotel safer by providing passing places.

Environment

The County is responsible for the disposal of the waste collected by the District and needs to increase the percentage of waste recycled to avoid heavy taxes on waste sent to landfill. Two state of the art refuse processing plants are in the process of being built, one outside Carlisle and one in Barrow. The Carlisle plant should be in operation later this year and will significantly reduce the amount sent to landfill. We can play our part in reducing waste by reusing whatever we can, particularly food, and taking unwanted clothes etc to the charity shops.

Childrens Services

The Childrens Centre will continue to function but there could be some reduction in service due to the government cuts. There is likely to be a major change in the way our schools are funded and organised. Keswick School, as a high performing school, is likely to become an Academy this year and leave any control from the County Council. In the future it is likely that junior schools will move in the same direction.

ALLERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ward Representative – Councillor David Robinson

It has been a difficult year for Allerdale. Cutting costs and saving money has been at the heart of every decision. So far there have been little in cuts to services but that can't last much longer. After the elections I see the council concentrating on core statutory responsibilities and cutting many other areas out. We will probably also see more rises in prices although Council tax has been frozen, parking fees and other services may yet rise.

As a town Keswick pays a huge amount into Allerdale. In terms of council tax we are the single biggest payer, more than Workington. But I can see little of it coming back to us soon.

Perhaps the two most contentious areas of debate would seem not to impact Keswick. The sale of the site in Workington to Tesco's has been delayed; this means the money council were expecting from the sale is not available and in this way Keswick will feel its impact.

There is also the debate over the possible building of a repository for nuclear waste in the area. Of all the councils in Great Britain only Allerdale and Copeland are involved in the process. I am very concerned that the lure of compensation money will prove too attractive to the west coast to resist and may drag us in without thinking things through. The geological surveys show under the Lake District hills to be the best place for it. An entrance on the west coast and a 16 mile tunnel could still put it under our local hills. I think we, as a town council should debate the issue soon so Councillors Kemp, Munby and I have a clear idea of the town's stance on this for future debate.

At the moment Allerdale is mostly about elections and getting anything done is hard. It will be interesting to see the make up of the council after 5th May. Keswick's representation is of course unaltered.

KEY PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The year has been another busy one for the Town Council and its staff.

The Council resolved to campaign vigorously against the proposed closure of Ravensfield Care Home and facilitated a number of meetings on this topic with representatives attending County Council and Cabinet meetings.

The Council has acted as the accountable body for flood action plan funding and oversees the work of the Flood Recovery Project Leader, attending monthly management meetings and meetings of the Flood Recovery and Emergency Group. A 'barbecue in the park' event took place in September 2010 as a thank you to all those involved in the 2009 floods.

Co-operation has taken place with local businesses to implement a voluntary busking badge scheme to assist in regulating problems caused by some street entertainers in the Market Square area. A representative of Keswick businesses is also working with a group of Councillors on a project to investigate the feasibility of the Town Council taking over responsibility for public toilet provision in Keswick.

Discussions have been held with Allerdale BC and other partners regarding a permit scheme to regulate vehicles on the foreshore area.

The Town Council made a major contribution to enable the construction of a new Community Sports Area at Fitz Park to be used by the community and sports clubs alike and to promote participation in sport. Other contributions were made to assist Keswick Museum to achieve match funding for their planned improvements and towards the flood defence scheme.

The Council continues to be represented at meetings of the Derwent 7 Cluster group of parishes and on its sub-groups covering housing, youth, transport and environment.

Councillors have also campaigned to achieve improvements to play area provision in the Windebrowe Avenue/Netherfield areas.

Resources were employed to supplement winter gritting carried out by Cumbria Highways to ensure that pavements and side roads were cleared so that residents could get into town to carry out normal daily activities.

The Council entered into a memorandum of agreement with the County Council during the year to facilitate the provision of a bench by Keswick in Bloom at the exit from the underpass opposite Hope Park.

Ongoing activities include provision of floral displays (in partnership with Keswick in Bloom), Christmas lights (in partnership with Keswick BID Ltd), the annual firework display (in partnership with Keswick Rugby Club), maintenance of the Penrith Road bus shelter and parking disc dispensers – thanks are due to the volunteers who keep the dispensers stocked with discs. The Hawthorns Allotment site continues to flourish.

The Council has responded to a number of consultation exercises during the year and commented on all planning applications affecting Keswick.

Councillors four year term of office ends on 9th May 2011 and there is to be no election for either of the Keswick wards – 11 nominations were made for the 12 seats available and a co-option will be necessary to fill the remaining seat. The next four years promised to be an exciting time with new opportunities arising from the Localism Bill.