



KESWICK TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2013/14

Welcome to the Town Council's Annual Report for 2013/14

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.

**Lynda Walker
Town Clerk
April 2014**

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Contact Details

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS DIRECT OR VIA

THE COUNCIL OFFICES
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The offices are normally open as follows: -

Monday to Friday
9.30am –1.00pm

Cllr David S Burn	The Bungalow, Ashtree Avenue, Keswick, CA12 5PF	017687 80371
Cllr David J Etherden	Orchard Cottage, Thornthwaite CA12 5SG	017687 78277
Cllr R Martin Jordan	Braeside, The Heads, Keswick CA12 5ER	017687 71249
Cllr Denstone Kemp	1 Vicarage Hill, Keswick CA12 5QB	017687 73490
Cllr Susan Leighton	5 Ratcliffe Place, Keswick, CA12 4DZ	017687 75195
Cllr Andrew Lysser	Apartment 2, Gatesgarth, Braithwaite CA12 5RY	017687 78833
Cllr Tony Lywood	Shu-Le-Crow, 7 Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4HF	017687 75253
Cllr D Miller	Linthwaite, Manor Brow, Keswick CA12 4AP	017687 72295
Cllr M Pugmire	6 Brandlehow Crescent, Keswick CA12 4JE	017687 73409
Cllr Keith M G Taylor	29 Castlehead Close, Keswick, CA12 4DJ	017687 73908
Cllr Lorraine Taylor	Glaramara, Halls Mead, Keswick CA12 4BE	017687 72034
Cllr Paul Titley	West View Guest House, The Heads, Keswick, CA12 5ES	017687 73638

THE COUNCIL

The Town Council consists of 12 voluntary 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):

Mrs Lynda Walker, Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

Miss Catherine Howe, Administration and Finance Officer

Mrs Jackie Langford, Administration and Finance Assistant

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 forum.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013-14

Councillor Martin Pugmire – Town Mayor

The year in Keswick has been defined by weather. Last summer was warm and dry, and the town's tourism as a result received a shot in the arm at the end of the long British recession. Then our winter, in marked contrast to what happened further south, proved reasonably dry. This mattered, as we were in a window of risk because United Utilities had not been able to complete their work on the sewerage/surface water system, meaning that such areas as Eliot Park and indeed part of Penrith Road might have been vulnerable to flash flooding of surface water. However, we are now past this period of risk, having avoided a crisis.

Several heartening projects were carried through. Most notable, perhaps, was the Community Housing Association's scheme for affordable housing off the Ambleside Road. But the BMX track, pushed through by the enthusiasm of young people and their families, was completed rapidly and is now in full use. The Museum and Art Gallery project was completed, though delays at the local government end mean that it will only open around Whit and not at Easter as planned. However, the Café on the park level will open earlier, and will I think make a huge difference to people using Lower Fitz play area all year. And, of course, the Theatre by the Lake has got funding and agreed plans for its new and splendid café on the Lakeland Tea Garden site, which will be a major help with the theatre's finances and will add greatly to the experience of anyone going down to the lake, especially in rough weather. It should be noted that when the café opens its doors, during 2015, it will extend a welcome all year, like the Museum café on the other side of town.

For the future, there is a dream for all of us in Keswick, the goal of getting enough affordable housing in Keswick for those who need it, especially the young singles and families. It will take work, but I think it will be done.

This year, we have had our share of problems on the roads. Road surfaces in the town are now in a terrible state, as all will know. Also, we have all suffered while United Utilities have worked, very efficiently I thought, on the new sewerage scheme. And, of course, everyone knows about the race by Cumbria Highways to get the Borrowdale Road open in time for Easter. 10 out of 10 for effort and speed.

Further issues lie before us. Will Allerdale's Executive push up parking charges again, in a vain attempt to get more blood out of the stone that is our car parks, thus putting tourism under pressure? Will County Council plans to charge for parking on some public roads do harm, as I suspect they may? But notwithstanding these issues, Keswick will remain what it is, a friendly, happy town that welcomes its visitors.

My own hope for the coming year is simple. A nice dry summer, with lots of sun, and a gentle winter to follow.

CHARITABLE TRUST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013-14

Councillor Duncan Miller – Trust Chairman

I mentioned at the last Trust Meeting that due to other commitments I will be handing over the Chair of the Trust at the AGM in May.

It is a time of reflection and during my time as Vice under Chair Ian Hall and in my 2 years as Chair I feel we have moved forward considerably. I am proud that I have been involved in the development of the new Golf Hut, been part of the team who negotiated the lease with Hope Park Leisure and worked with all concerned to provide the excellent Community Sports Area in Lower Fitz. Fitz Park, I feel, is 'alive' and with the help of the hugely successful Play Area and the newly completed Keswick Museum 'footfall' in this area can only increase. Of course recently I have been involved in encouraging the professionally constructed BMX/Pump track. This initiative has been a joy as many wondered if we would ever deliver a finished product. The enthusiasm and 'never say die' attitude of some of the youngsters has kept myself, and others in the planning team, motivated.

I am encouraged by the success of the Fitz Park User meetings that we have organised concerning mainly Sports Clubs in Upper and Lower Fitz. These get-togethers can sort out problems before they manifest and allow officials/representatives of the Clubs to meet each other.

A big thank you must go to Elizabeth Barraclough and her 'working party' team who supplement the work of the gardeners with their weeding, digging and planting. At this stage I must also thank James our Head Gardener and his team for all their hard work and for being so approachable if ever I had a request or needed information.

Finally grateful thanks to Lynda and Catherine in the office for your patience, guidance and good counsel.

I look forward with interest on how Keswick Parks develop and prosper in the years to come.

Councillor Duncan Miller
Chairman

FINANCIAL REPORT

Lynda Walker - Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014

Expenditure

	£
General Administration (inc salaries)	57,604
Communications	462
Mayors Allowance	2,000
Grants awarded	15,139
Christmas Lights	20,690
War Memorial	822
Townfield	800
Open Spaces	1,000
Fitz Park	88,514
Contingency	8,350
Floral Displays	6,781
Town Celebrations	5,000
Allotments	548
Professional fees	517
Advertising	307
Audit fee	1,100
Total	209,634

Income

	£
Precept and grants from Allerdale BC	224,142
Interest	51
Rent	11,000
Event banner advertising space	1,114
Allotment income	600
Christmas lights contributions	700
Total	237,607
General income less expenditure	£27,973

NB: Figures quoted are subject to audit.

Interested parties and local electors are able to exercise their right to inspect the financial records before the annual audit takes place. The records will be made available from 30 June to 25 July 2014 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 2013/14:

Great North Air Ambulance	£ 500
Greta Pre-School	£ 300
Keswick Athletic Club	£ 300
Keswick in Bloom	£2,250
1 st Keswick Scout Group	£1,250
Keswick Tourism Association	£ 750
Theatre by the Lake (youth etc work)	£3,500
Keswick Youth Club	£1,650
Keswick Rugby Club	£3,000
Keswick Cricket Club	£1,500
Total	£15,000

The Council also made a financial contribution of £5,000 to Keswick Flood Action Group towards a community pump and £100 to Keswick Film Club towards their Volunteer Oral History Project.

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.

CUMBRIA THEATRE TRUST

Council Representative – Councillor Martin Pugmire

(Report submitted by Patric Gilchrist, Executive Director, Theatre by the Lake)

Cumbria Theatre Trust is the not-for-profit company and registered charity that owns and operates Theatre by the Lake. Cllr Martin Pugmire is a Voluntary Director of the company, nominated by Keswick Town Council.

2013/14 was a challenging year for the theatre. Although ticket sales remained at a high level, the effects of the recession were such that funding from public sources declined and the ancillary spend of theatre customers on food, drink and items of merchandise declined. However, artistic momentum was maintained through fundraising initiatives, supported in part through an Arts Lottery scheme which matched donations from individuals and from the Friends of Theatre by the Lake. Without this new source of support, the theatre's programme of performances and participatory activities would have gone into decline. In fact, levels of activity were maintained and a number of important initiatives were introduced, including "relaxed" performances for young people and adults – and for their carers – whose disabilities normally preclude theatre visits. Family Friendly initiatives included an autumn festival of participatory activities and a special pre-Christmas play for 2 - 5 year olds.

The main programme of in-house productions and performances started the year with *Rogue Herries*, adapted from the Hugh Walpole novel and set in and around Keswick. The production involved a large chorus of local people as well as professional actors. The Summer Season of six plays offered the usual variety of crowd pleasing Main House productions and exciting and challenging plays in the Studio, including the theatre's first Jacobean Tragedy. *Swallows and Amazons* was a successful Festive Season offer and the year ended with a Brian Friel play in the Main House and a Studio production, *Not About Heroes*, which commemorated the start of the First World War and which has subsequently toured to village halls and other community venues in Cumbria.

The programme of visiting performances was as strong as ever with the theatre hosting festivals of literature, jazz and film and the lecture programme of the Keswick Mountain Festival.

The work of local organisations continued to play an important part in the programme, with the theatre presenting the work of amateur groups (Keswick Amateur Operatic Society and Keswick Theatre Club) and promotions by voluntary organisations including Keswick Music Society's concert series, Keswick Film Club's festival and fundraising concerts hosted by the Rotary Club and other organisations. Local groups of artists and individuals exhibited at the theatre and over 50 young people participated in regular Youth Theatre sessions and a Young Writer's Group in Keswick.

During the year, the theatre undertook qualitative research which demonstrated a high level of approval both for performances and for the overall experience of attending Theatre by the Lake. This research also included an analysis of the economic impact of the theatre on the local economy. With around 100 people on the payroll most weeks and over 125,000 attendances at performances, 40% of whom are visitors to Cumbria, Theatre by the Lake and its work contributed £13 million during the year to the local economy.

Although the economic climate remains bleak, Theatre by the Lake approaches its 15th birthday with optimism. Over 200 volunteers continue to offer support valued at £100,000 per annum and, during the year, planning consent was obtained for a new café on the Lakeside Tea Gardens site adjacent to the theatre. This development will help to secure the long term future of the theatre, contributing to the operation's financial resilience and providing a year-round catering service for both theatre customers and for daytime visitors to the Derwentwater foreshore area. Theatre by the Lake continues to make a huge contribution to the cultural, social and economic life of Keswick.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE JOINT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Council Representative – Councillor Martin Jordan

There has not been a JMAG meeting for many months, although there have been some changes during the year.

The date for the next meeting is 1st May 2014 and an update report will be given via the Town Council agenda at that point.

KESWICK TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Council Representative – Councillor Duncan Miller

I have very little to report following my end of the year summary of the 2013 Season. However as you are all aware KTA and KTC continue to liaise and have dialogue when appropriate and common issues are raised.

In this instance I am delighted to report that KTA has written to KTC advising of their full support for a longer term and more satisfying outcome to the provision of toilet facilities that befits a town of Keswick's status in the tourism market. In essence it is hoped that Allerdale Borough Council will provide funding for these facilities that is in some way linked to the income that they take from the Council owned car parks.

I am also pleased to report that KTA are delighted with the response of local residents who took part in celebrating English Tourism Week. Linda Furniss, Tourism Officer, advised me that a major part of the week was to raise the profile of the industry with local people. During the week KTA worked with eight activity/attraction providers who offered free entry to residents living in the CA12 area. I was not available on the day but am pleased to report that The Mayor and Councillor Lysser took part and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

I have been invited, along with other organisations, to the KTA Board Meeting on the 21st May when I shall update those in attendance of Councils output/decisions etc.

KESWICK YOUTH CLUB

Council Representative – Councillor David Etherden

Another year where progress to replace the Youth Club has tried everyone's patience.

The site has now been cleared and the Environment Agency has completed the works on the flood defences. The site has now been put up for sale with a land agent. The Youth Club has received some interest and is hopeful that a sale will be completed in 2014. Whilst not certain, the sale could mean that the Youth Club will move off the site completely and look to either hire or build a new Youth Club building elsewhere in Keswick and the Club is exploring a number of possibilities.

In the interim the sale of other small parcels of land owned by the Youth Club is also being progressed and will be completed in the next few months.

Whilst the Youth Club has not had a building the Club has continued to function thanks to the great efforts of Mark Stainton and his team of volunteers. After a short period at Costa the Club moved to the Methodist Church on Southey Street. After Easter the Club will move once again this time to the rooms under the newly refurbished Keswick Museum.

KESWICK AND DISTRICT FAIR TRADE CAMPAIGN

Council Representative – Councillor Susan Leighton

The FT campaign group has a new banner which was displayed during Fair Trade Fortnight in February of this year when the national emphasis was on the selling of Fairtrade Bananas. Visas for potential visitors from Choche are still proving elusive, but a visit to this Ethiopian village from Keswick FT members will take place in autumn 2014. Choche School now has its new extension completed and employs 7 male and 3 female teachers, has electricity and computers. Fairtrade supporters and friends have contributed to the cost of lighting for the children to study by. 104 Farmers have benefitted from the million Burr project, and are beginning to improve their coffee bean bushes to give a better yield and greater income. There are now 53 places in Keswick where FT products such as tea and coffee are being served, which is encouraging for our Fair Trade Town.

4 students of Keswick School ran a Fair Trade Coffee shop at a recent parents' evening, as part of their Business Course.

'Fairtrade' talks are still being given by Joe Human, the committee continues to meet frequently, and the Fair Trade Campaign AGM is on Wednesday 21st May at the Crosthwaite Parish Room.

KESWICK IN BLOOM

Council Representative – Councillor Susan Leighton

The Keswick in Bloom group aims to keep the planters, flower mangers, plant towers and the many flower beds which are dotted around the town, looking attractive.

Recently the group took over responsibility for the flower bed by the Lake Road Underpass, and extensive work has begun on this area beginning with new trees and shrubs.

The annual flower painting competition took place last summer and involved 6 local schools with the paintings being displayed in Booths and the Theatre by the Lake.

The Keswick in Bloom Awards Ceremony took place in August. In the Cumbria in Bloom Competition, KIB gained the Allerdale Trophy for Best in Borough, a Rose Bowl for Chestnut Park's Community Garden, were Runners up for The Rose Lodge and in the Jennings Cup Trophy for best small Town, received a Silver Gilt award.

This year is the 50th Anniversary of Britain in Bloom and Sunflower Seeds will be sown around the town by the Brownies and Cubs, and work has begun with Keswick School Boarders to create Window boxes or tubs as part of their Environmental Project.

Everyone involved in this never-ending work is to be congratulated and thanked, and can be spotted more easily now due to their purchasing of new brightly coloured Tabards.

KESWICK FLOOD AND EMERGENCY RECOVERY GROUP

Council Representative – Councillor Martin Pugmire

The emergency group continues to meet regularly, usually under my chairmanship. It employs an officer to conduct administrative and similar tasks, using funding remaining from the aftermath of the 2009 floods. The Flood Action Group is a member of the Committee, and it is attended by a range of emergency service staff and representatives of District and County Councils.

There has been a very considerable change of relevant personnel at District and County levels, and a key function of the committee has been to reinforce links with new officers and to prevent the loss of institutional memory that risks losing everyone what was learned in 2009. We also pay for some training of volunteers, and aim to plan for a range of possible calamities, not just flooding.

The only meaningful test of our work will be a future calamity, which we hope will not occur, but it is our view that planning is currently on a sound basis, with the County and the District much more aware of issues than they sometimes have been in the past.

FITZ PARK SPORTS PAVILION

Council Representative – Councillor Keith Taylor (Report submitted by Philip Pridmore, Secretary)

THE CLUBS

Cricket

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

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.

A junior committee helps 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. Future proposals already being explored are lights around the footpath around Lower Fitz Park to aid training.

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.

Overall Review

The pavilion facility is now 21 years old and continues to be well utilised throughout the year by the remaining user groups and a small number of outsider 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 & tear” are being assessed by a “fabric committee” and funds targeted towards renovations where required.

KESWICK FLOOD ACTION GROUP

Council Representatives – Councillors P Titley & K Taylor

Community Pumps: Until long-term solutions are implemented to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, two community pumps will soon be housed in Keswick. One is being paid for by the Keswick community: K FAG, Town Council, Flood and Emergency Recovery Group, Impact Housing, Keswick residents (mostly from the Elliot Park area), and Booths Supermarket (the latter yet to be confirmed). One pump will be kept at Elliot Park, and the other will be kept in the fire station, to be deployed by staff from the Environment Agency or County Council when required.

Elliot Park: The United Utilities scheme, which is now completed, has significantly reduced the risk of sewage contaminated flooding. The County Council has now received what should be the required funding for a permanent pump to deal with water flooding, and hopes to go out to tender in May 2014 with construction later this summer. When this pump is in place, the community pump from Elliot Park will remain in Keswick situated at a site to be agreed, until long term solutions for the Ambleside Road/Penrith Road surface water flood risk have been implemented and the risk judged to be reduced to an appropriate level.

Penrith Road: A consultant’s report last year proposed upstream storage in the field opposite Springs Road, which would protect properties from surface water flooding from Ambleside Road down to Penrith Road. This report suggested that there would still be risk to the properties in the dip at Penrith Road (in the Wivell Bridge area), but the County Council is commissioning more modelling to investigate the risk in more detail. Whilst £50,000 of funding has been secured by the County Council for design and appraisal work for the upstream storage proposal, it is envisaged that funds held by K FAG will eventually be required for the implementation of the scheme.

Drains: Very slowly, some of the problems with drains and culverts are being sorted out, but one of K FAG's Executive Committee members, Rod Donington-Smith, and others still shoulder a large burden in checking and clearing gullies. He communicates regularly with the County Council about specific problems, the main ones this year being a reduction in the programme of gully cleaning and the failure to remove soggy fallen leaves off the pavements and roads. The consequences of these shortcomings have been highlighted to Doug Coyle, the County Council officer responsible for surface water flooding matters.

Thirlmere: Whilst United Utilities have been operating the reservoir to provide some storm capacity with trigger levels agreed by K FAG, they still do not have the ability to release the significant amounts of water which can really make achieving storm capacity meaningful, particularly in the winter months when we get storm after storm in the catchments area. In fact, the reservoir overflowed continually this winter from just before Christmas through until early March. Meetings with Lord Campbell-Savours, K FAG and United Utilities have not resulted in further progress during the last years due to the multi-million pound scheme being proposed in connection with Thirlmere to provide drinking water to West Cumbria. However, strong representations have been and will continue to be made to use this opportunity to find an engineering solution to enable greater volumes of water to be released, and more quickly, when extreme weather conditions are forecast.

Insurance: Many people in Keswick are still experiencing difficulty in obtaining affordable insurance for their properties. K FAG continues to advise those struggling with their insurance renewal and also has worked with Lord Campbell-Savours and the National Flood Forum to lobby the British Insurance Brokers Association over the future of the Flood Re insurance scheme.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Lynda Walker, Town Clerk

At the last Annual Town meeting, the Town Council launched the process to develop a five year Business Plan and outlined how the community could be involved in this. The response was overwhelming and with the help of Action for Market Towns, a thorough consultation process took place. Many thanks to everyone who took part.

The Business Plan was adopted in September 2013 and is being monitored on a monthly basis. A full review will take place in September 2014. The plan provides a framework for the Council's ongoing and new activities and contains much information about the Council's role and responsibilities.

A new website was developed during the year and can be viewed at www.keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk. This will be developed as time goes on.

One of the main projects during the last year has been the provision of new Christmas lighting for the Market Square. Many compliments have been received about the new displays which were chosen to provide a contrast with the previous scheme.

The Council continues to maintain the War Memorial, the Townsfield and other open spaces in the town and manages a small allotment site at the Hawthorns, Penrith Road. Floral displays were provided around the town in conjunction with Keswick In Bloom.

The Council meets every two months in its capacity as Sole Trustee of Keswick Parks Charitable Trusts to ensure the provision and maintenance of public parks and recreation grounds for use of Keswick's residents and visitors. The major part of the Town Council's expenditure supports Fitz Park, which is home to a number of sporting organisations and has a destination play area and Community Sports Area together with a small car park. A new BMX Pump track was opened in December following the initiative of local youngsters who carried out fundraising, and with the support of the charity Groundwork. Following the announcement by Allerdale Borough Council of its withdrawal of concurrent grant funding over two years, a replacement grant of £20,000 was successfully negotiated for future years.

No progress has been made during the year with Allerdale Borough Council regarding public toilet provision in Keswick although the Town Council continues to make representations about the unsatisfactory condition of these facilities. Successful lobbying has resulted in long overdue improvements to the toilets at the Council offices and the Council Chamber and these are now nearing completion.

The Town Council has continued to remain active in the Derwent 7 Parishes cluster with representation on the sub groups and the Steering Committee. Funding has been secured to continue the partnership's work for the next two years. Representatives have also attended partnership meetings with the Borough and County Councils and the Lake District National Park Authority.

The Council organised and funded a Midsummer Festival which took place on Sunday 30 June in the Market Square and will repeat this event on 29th June 2014 as part of a week-long Keswick Festival.

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