



ANNUAL REPORT

2018/19

Welcome to the Town Council's Annual Report for 2018/19

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 2019**

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

E-mail: office@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk

The offices are normally open as follows: -

Monday to Friday
9.30am –1.00pm

Please note that elections will take place on 2nd May 2019 and Councillor details will change following this date due to Councillors standing down. See our website for up to date information.

Cllr David S Burn	The Bungalow, Ashtree Avenue, Keswick, CA12 5PF	017687 80371
Cllr Allan D Daniels	31 Lakehead Court, Keswick, CA12 5EU	017687 44531
Cllr R Martin Jordan	Braeside, The Heads, Keswick CA12 5ER	017687 71249
Cllr Denstone Kemp	1 Vicarage Hill, Keswick CA12 5QB	017687 73490
Cllr Graham Kendall	32 Stanger Street, Keswick, CA12 5LZ	017687 80894
Cllr Susan Leighton	5 Ratcliffe Place, Keswick, CA12 4DZ	017687 75195
Cllr Tony Lywood	Shu-Le-Crow, 7 Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4HF	017687 75253
Cllr Duncan Miller	Linthwaite, Manor Brow, Keswick CA12 4AP	017687 72295
Cllr Jean Murray	33 Wordsworth Street, Keswick, CA12 4BZ	017687 75078
Cllr Adam Paxon	Toll Bar Cottage, Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4JR	07989 386599
Cllr Martin Pugmire	6 Brandlehow Crescent, Keswick CA12 4JE	017687 73409
Cllr Paul Titley	32 Penrith Road, Keswick, CA12 4HA	017686 06015

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 Lynda Walker, Town Clerk

Mrs Catherine Parker, Responsible Financial Officer

Miss Ania Mlnczak, 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 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. Meetings normally take place at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber on the first floor of 50 Main Street, Keswick.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018-19

Councillor David Burn – Town Mayor

I was Town Mayor in 2016-17 and am now coming towards the end of my second spell as Mayor. As before, it has been a very varied and interesting year.

Although Keswick is a very safe place to live, it was noticeable from Police Reports to the Town Council that the lack of a CCTV system often hampered investigations. We were told that a high proportion of criminal activity either starts, crosses, or finishes in Market Square so we have installed a 4 camera system at this location. This works well but it is only possible to view footage after an incident has happened. We are currently in discussions with Cumbria Police to see whether our system can be linked to the police system which would allow incidents to be observed in real time.

We all know about the number of pedestrian falls, often resulting in injuries including broken bones, in Market Square. These have been occurring since Market Square was redesigned some 15 years ago and were largely caused by the kerbs around the square being at different levels. Good work by some of our councillors has resulted in Cumbria County Council re-doing the kerbs, and I am pleased to report that this work has now finished.

And the further good news about Market Square is that the Moot Hall is once more in the town's possession, having been sold by Allerdale Borough Council to the Battersby Trust in January of this year.

Residents often complained about the number of camper vans parked overnight on Longbridge Lane (the approach to Portinscale pedestrian bridge). The Town Council repeatedly lobbied Cumbria County Council to introduce parking restrictions there, and "No Overnight Parking" signs have been erected. The camper vans immediately moved to Church Lane but later similar signs there seem to have cured this problem. We cannot claim 100% success on Longbridge Lane, but the problem has massively improved.

I was heavily involved in supporting Keswick's Flood Action Group during my first term as Mayor. Regular removal of river gravel particularly at High Hill was one of the things for which we jointly lobbied, and I am pleased to say that the Environment Agency have agreed to do this. The Town Council also has arrangements in place with two Cumbrian aggregates companies to extract river gravel free of charge should the Environment Agency not have the funds to do so in future years, but this still leaves the cost of a licence to work in the River Greta as a potential cost to the town. The bad news is that the cost of the licence has increased from £170 to £968 but the good news is that Keswick Ministries, who own the former pencil factory site, have said that they will fund the cost of the licence should the need arise.

The Town Council has had concerns for a number of years about traffic speeds on both Chestnut Hill and High Hill. We have lobbied both Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Police asking to be allowed to install Speed Indication Devices at both of these locations. Data on traffic speeds has been collected by both organisations, and there is now acceptance that a Speed Indication Device would be justified on Chestnut Hill. One set of data collected by the Police on High Hill showed speeds were only 1 mph below the threshold for enforcement but Cumbria County Council continue to refuse permission for a Speed Indication Device at this location – despite the fact that it is used by many Keswick School students as their route to and from school, and between the school and the town

centre. An e-petition asking Cumbria County Council to agree to the Town Council's request raised 327 signatures, while a traditional paper petition was signed by 330 people. I have presented these petitions to the County Council, and we await their response.

As I said earlier, it has been a very varied and interesting year! I am grateful to all of the Councillors and staff for their contributions and support.

PARKS TRUST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018-19

Councillor Adam Paxon

The Easter holidays are upon us once again and our parks are in resplendent condition. I was in Fitz Park yesterday walking around with family and discussing with my four year old the changes we could see and how things are growing and developing, and remembering all the reinstatement work that has happened since the floods of 2015. His connection with the parks is only beginning. For many members of the town the parks have been an important touchstone of their lives in Keswick. I often see and pass the time of day with people who have known me since I was a child. This lifelong connection with these spaces is something that we as Trustees should be ever respectful and mindful of. While our parks are enjoyed by so many visitors each year, Keswickians take great pride in their parks, particularly Fitz, and enjoy them daily.

The resplendence the parks currently effuse doesn't occur by accident and we are indebted as Trustees for the endeavours of our staff team of Peter, Sarah and Kevin, led by Christine and Matt, and thank them for their tireless efforts. The support of the team in the office of Lynda, Catherine and Ania needs to be recognized too, and applauded, as does the contribution from the sports users in Fitz and the volunteers who help in both Fitz and Hope Parks.

The parks that this town enjoys cover a significant area and we are ever grateful to the sports users who through their custodianship of their own sports areas make the remaining area more realistically manageable for our staff team. As I walk round Fitz Park the football pitches, cricket pitch, and bowling club green all stand out like jewels. The pride in these areas shown by the club members is tantamount and is something that we as trustees are eternally thankful for. The relationship between trustees, the parks and office staff and the sports users is the magic that makes things work in Fitz Park, and the relationship with Ray Dowding and Hope Leisure the magic that makes Hope Park work.

Hope Park has been revitalized through the continuing relationship with Ray and Hope Leisure. A new lease has finally been signed and we look forward to many more years of working with Ray. Christine has carried out extensive maintenance work on several putting greens and further maintenance of paths is planned for the coming year. Hope Park now benefits from new buildings for staff use, which we hope makes their job that little bit more attractive, particularly in the periods of inclement weather that this part of the world is renowned for at times.

Ray has also agreed to continue to run the games in Fitz Park, which provides an asset enjoyed by so many visitors, and locals. We are indebted to our staff for their work to keep all in such attractive condition. Few towns enjoy a public bowling green of such magnificence, and possibly fewer towns benefit from such glorious grass tennis courts, for both club and public use.

Fitz Park now benefits from a new outdoor gym, which is often humming with activity when I pass by. We have invested in the car park and now receive better, much needed, income. Maintenance of the children's playground continues and needs to keep pace with its heavy use. When you have small children you tend to spend time in these spaces, and it quickly becomes obvious that few places have a facility as extensive and appealing as we have here in our hometown.

We now have distance markers around the perimeter of Fitz Park and are grateful to Steve Harwood and Keswick Athletic Club for this. We are also indebted to Steve for the countless projects where he has assisted the Trust in our work in the Parks.

Special mention also needs to be made for the contribution from Keith Richardson, not only for his endless work with the cricket club but also for the work in producing the Fitz Park banner and signage which makes the Park more accessible for the un-initiated.

On a more sombre note it is sad when trees reach the end of their life, and difficult for us as mere human beings to resign ourselves to their loss. We have many trees of significance throughout our parks and great effort and expense is expounded in their nurture. We haven't always benefitted from the insight and experience held within our current staff team and they do their utmost to ensure all is done to safeguard what they have inherited. The sad fact is that we have recently lost a number of precious trees and will in the future lose more. This is the nature of the beast. We can only do everything we can to ensure we continue to nurture, safeguard and when loss occurs to replant, and develop the parks' richness for future generations.

Countless visitors enjoy our parks each year, yet Fitz Park is financed by a small grant from Allerdale and the precept payers of the town. The people of the town are greatly outnumbered by visitors but those residents shoulder the burden of payment. We have developed the donation box at the entrance to the playground to give people an opportunity to contribute and may benefit from developing this concept in future, if we are to continue to keep our parks in the condition we Keswickians and visitors have come to expect and cherish.

As I close this report I would just like to give a final thank you to all, and a special thank you to Duncan Miller, Vice-Chair, for all the assistance he freely offers. It would be a less attractive proposition to be Chair of the Parks without you Duncan!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Catherine Parker – Responsible Financial Officer

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019

Expenditure	£
General Administration (inc salaries)	66,173
Mayors Allowance	2,000
Grants awarded	14,520
Christmas Lights	29,550
War Memorial	1,379
Townsfeld	855
Open Spaces	1,000
Fitz Park	122,044
Floral Displays	5,236
Town Events inc Scruffs	10,914
Events Co-Ordinator	2,008
Allotments	186
Advertising	265
Audit fee/Accounts preparation	0
Promotional Gifts	0
Contingency sum	1,410
Annual Parish Meeting	49
Communications	0
Professional Advice	0
Event Banner Expenditure	0
Total	257,589

Income	£
Precept and grants from Allerdale BC	267,639
Interest (inc Townsfeld)	74
Rent – Walker Park	12,267
Event banner advertising space	1,000
Allotment income	950
Income from General Reserves	0
Keswick Events contributions	5,643
Total	287,573

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 2018/19:

Citizens Advice Allerdale	400
Great North Air Ambulance	250
Keswick & District Community First Responders	120
Keswick Film Club	400
Keswick in Bloom	3500
Keswick Museum	1500
Keswick School	1000
1 st Keswick Scouts Group	1500
Keswick Tourism Association	500
Lakeland Rowing Club	750
St Herbert's School	600
St Johns Ambulance	500
Theatre by the Lake	3500
Total	14520

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 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP

Council Representative – Councillor Martin Pugmire

Over the last year Keswick Community Emergency Recovery Partnership (KCERP) has continued to train volunteers and improve the Community Emergency Plan (CEP) for Keswick. By being a partner in this, Keswick Town Council provides invaluable support to this community organisation.

Over the last year KCERP has achieved the following:

The Partnership has held regular Trustee meetings (4) and wider Partnership meetings (2).

We currently have 90 volunteers registered with us, as well as pledged support from Keswick WI and Keswick School Boarders. This gives us a huge pool of people to call on.

We have completed an annual review and updated the Community Emergency Plan.

We have provided a number of training sessions for volunteers.

We have written, printed and delivered our own leaflet to households at risk of flooding – encouraging them to plan and prepare.

In addition to this planned work, time has been spent with other developing emergency groups, sharing ideas and offering support.

We are currently planning an emergency exercise for October.

The Partnership is grateful for the support of Keswick Town Council, particularly the time and support given by Lynda Walker and Martin Pugmire in their roles as Trustees and the use of the Council Chamber for training and in the event of an emergency. The financial support offered for the upcoming year is essential for the ongoing maintenance of this critical voluntary response.

CUMBRIA THEATRE TRUST

Council Representative – Councillor Martin Pugmire

No report submitted.

KESWICK AND DISTRICT FAIR TRADE CAMPAIGN

Council Representative – Councillor Allan Daniels

The Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign has been in existence now for fifteen years and has a membership of almost one hundred. In February, during Fairtrade Fortnight, we had a stall on the market.

The main aim was to draw attention to Fairtrade Fortnight - to remind as many people as possible about Fairtrade. We also raffled a hamper of Fairtrade products donated to us by Lakes and Dales Co-op. The Fairtrade Service this year was held in the Quaker Meeting House in Keswick.

In May, Jo Alberti gave a talk to teachers at a Fairtrade Schools' [20 of them!] conference in Carlisle. Mike and Jo gave a talk to the U3A in June and then to the Keswick WI in July:

The AGM of the Keswick Fair Trade Campaign took place on June 6th. The committee and its officers were re-elected unopposed: Mike Glover as Chair; Cath Glover as Treasurer; Jo Alberti as Secretary and Bob Bryden, Bernadette Fagan and Sheila Tolley as committee members.

In June, Jo Alberti attended a Town Council Meeting in order to encourage one of the members to replace Councillor Adam Paxon on the committee; Allan Daniels volunteered and we have been delighted to welcome him.

In August the Campaign had a stall at the Agricultural Show serving coffee and tea and giving out chocolate. There was again a Fairtrade Stall at the Victorian Fayre in Keswick on Sunday December 2nd. The stall was organised by Caldbeck Fairtrade Campaign. Keswick campaigners worked on the stall, in particular offering chocolate to taste. On December 8th the Campaign had a presence in Booths. A hamper was filled with Fairtrade goods offered in Booths: the idea was that people coming to the store would know what Fairtrade products are available.

There is now an advertisement for Fairtrade playing at the Alhambra Cinema, using film provided by the Fairtrade Foundation. Traidcraft, which has imported and sold Fairtrade products since 1979, made losses last year and has had to agree a rescue plan which involves slimming the company down. The big concern is for producers who have only got access to market through Traidcraft. Some 700 women in India, for example, are employed making hand-stitched cards. Traidcraft is proposing to focus on a core range of grocery products such as tea, coffee, and lavatory paper, and fewer handicrafts. The rescue plan, which was put forward by a group of staff last month, sets out a proposal for a membership scheme for customers, which will encourage people to get together to buy products to save money on delivery and cut down on packaging waste.

KESWICK FLOOD ACTION GROUP **Council Representative – Councillor Martin Jordan**

PROGRESS OVER THE LAST YEAR

Gravel Management:

The Environment Agency (EA) removed large quantities of gravel from the bend at High Hill last summer. There has been a further build-up and KFAG are monitoring it and have asked the EA if there are plans to remove more this year. KFAG appreciates the Town Council's support over this problem.

Elliott Park:

Discussions with Cumbria County Council (CCC) have been taking place about:

- 1) Protecting the electrical supply and control box for the pumps

- 2) Whether something should be done about the bund between Elliott Park and the Rugby Club. It is there to protect Elliott Park from water from the Derwent that has flowed across the rugby field. However, in the three recent floods the water flows have come from the opposite direction and been held back by the bund increasing the depth of floodwater within Elliott Park.

Penrith Road West:

CCC has now got the financial arrangements organised and purchased the land required for upstream storage. So at long last construction work is due to begin shortly to install a system under Penrith Road to pump surface water into the river and also to create an upstream water storage facility in the field beside Springs Road.

Calvert Way and Brundholme Gardens:

The length of time it was taking to resolve the surface water flooding problems in this area was, in our view, not acceptable for the affected residents. Also, it was never intended to have the town's emergency pump as a permanent fixture at just one location where it acts as a deterrent to any potential house purchasers.

In an attempt to encourage the relevant parties to agree a way forward to resolve the drainage problems, we have to date organised five mediation meetings starting on 29 October 2018. These meetings were all chaired by Mark Hodgson and involved representatives from CCC, Atkinsons (the building firm responsible for the Calvert Way development), Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) Planning Department, United Utilities (UU) (with their involvement in the pipe laying work across Sheepdog Field), Keswick Community Housing Trust and K FAG

The possible effects of climate change and the likelihood that the remainder of Sheepdog Field will be eventually developed should be considered when planning amendments to the drainage systems. At the last meeting it was agreed that Atkinsons would be providing Doug Coyle (CCC) with their calculations of pipe capacity requirements. It is appreciated that Keswick Parks Trust has already given consent for a new pipe to be laid under the far end of Fitz Park into the river.

Thirlmere:

UU has now replaced the "Drawdown" valves at the bottom of their dam but are still working on the outlet channels into St John's Beck. Once this work has been completed they should be able to release up to 750MI/d as opposed to 140MI/d currently. However, UU is reluctant to consider making any releases above 600MI/d, which is the figure they believe will keep the flow within the riverbanks.

The reason given for the company's wish to restrict releases is that it cannot at present risk damaging properties downstream without fear of litigation. The minor flooding of fields through controlled releases could be construed as damage for which it might be held liable whilst devastation caused by the reservoir overtopping can be passed off as Acts of God. This situation is illogical and totally unacceptable which is why we have again briefed Trudy Harrison MP for a meeting she has arranged with Therese Coffey MP, the Minister concerned. K FAG are grateful for the Town Council adding their voice to our request for legislation.

Al Cook and Dr Ed Henderson have produced several very detailed factual reports over the year with findings based on their own observations as well as their examination of available figures and statistics. Their widely circulated "Thirlmere Water Balance" report issued in September 2018 shows what releases would have been required to prevent or at least

minimalise the damage caused by Storm Desmond to the area around Keswick and further upstream. Availability of the dam's two upper valves for controlled releases would provide scope for better water level management. The contents of this report have been accepted as credible by UU and the EA but no detailed response has been received to date.

In parallel Natural England (NE) and the EA have arranged for APEM to carry out a study to establish the effects that unnatural water flows are having upon St John's Beck. It is likely that periodic, much greater water releases from Thirlmere will be beneficial for the salmon. It was proposed that trial releases would start to be carried out later this year once this became possible. However, last month on 12 March the reservoir overtopped for the first time since the winter of 2015/16. Over the subsequent few days members of KFAG as well as staff from the EA and NE were out taking photographs along St John's Beck to get a record of the effects on the surrounding farmland. Matching the times that the photographs were taken it is possible calculate the comparative water flows down the spillway. The highest flows were on 16 March totalling about 1,500MI/d and photographs taken at the time show some flooding in fields. We are awaiting reports from farmers to establish what damage, if any, was caused by these water flows, which were well over the 600MI/d proposed by UU. A date has yet to be agreed for a meeting with APEM.

In December members of KFAG took John Curtin, the EA's Executive Director of Floods and Coastal Risk Management, along with a group of his senior officers, on a tour starting at Thirlmere to help explain some of our concerns and why we believe that water level management is so important. We felt that he understood our concerns and would take these on board, when he reported back later in the week to Therese Coffey. His visit was the result of Lord Campbell Savours contacting Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity.

In March 2019, accompanied by Sam Townend (EA), we took Bryan Homan, UU's Head of Water Resources Asset Strategy, on a tour that included New Bridge and the landslide area upstream of Keswick (which has been the focus of a recent report and further work by the British Geological Society due to concerns over the radical alteration of this section and the vulnerability of the slopes in any future events). It was very useful to acquaint him with the area downstream of Thirlmere and to show him the significant changes that the unprecedented flows during Storm Desmond had on the area. As a Warrington-based senior officer unfamiliar with this area it helped to clarify why we are so concerned and why we feel water level management at Thirlmere is so essential.

Other matters:

KFAG is supporting the Cumbrian MPs, who are wanting changes made to the funding arrangements for flooded communities. At present they benefit urban areas to the detriment of more rural communities, such as those in Cumbria.

KESWICK MINISTRIES TOWN LIAISON MEETINGS **Council Representative – Councillor Jean Murray**

Town Liaison Meetings were set up to improve communication and co-operation between businesses, residents and the organisers of the annual Keswick Convention event.

Meetings are held quarterly. Keswick Town Council is represented by Councillor Jean Murray and Councillor Adam Paxon. There are also representatives from Keswick Tourism Association, local churches, and the police.

On the whole, there has been poor representation from businesses in the town, with fewer people attending as the meetings progress. This will need to be addressed if the meetings are to continue in any meaningful way.

It has been an eventful 12 months for Convention organisers. The plans to develop the old pencil factory as the new Convention site were subject to close scrutiny by the Town Council and were rejected several times for amendments to be made, particularly with regard to limiting noise nuisance and traffic management.

The development plans have now been agreed and have been approved by the Lake District National Park Authority planning officers. Development has now started on the site, with the expectation that the 2020 event will take place there, and full development will be completed by 2022/3.

Phase 1 will run for the next 18 months and will involve:

- demolition of warehousing
- building of hard standing for marquee
- clear out basement of factory to build toilet facilities

Phase 2 will involve the full renovation of the site and is expected to be completed by 2022/23. There are no plans in place at present regarding the disposal of the Skiddaw Street site.

Several undertakings have been given by Convention organisers with regard to the monitoring of noise nuisance at the new site. Organisers have agreed to purchase a Marquee with some soundproofing qualities, and also to ventilate this internally, not by rolling up the sides of the marquee in hot weather, which has led to complaints about unacceptable levels of noise nuisance on the Skiddaw Street site. Additionally it has been agreed with Allerdale Borough Council that noise levels will be monitored by Environmental Health Officers and will be restricted to 65 decibels. Events will be time limited, with evening sessions ending by 9.30, with the exception of one music event per week which will finish by 10.15.

There was some discussion about complaints received during the 2018 event, and it was felt that not all complaints had been noted or registered as such. There will be a different system for the 2019 event to try to ensure that all complaints are both registered and dealt with by a manager on site. A dedicated phone line will also be established to respond to complaints and the number will be published.

Representatives from the businesses that attended generally welcomed that the programme had been amended to allow attendees more free time in the town. Some businesses had responded to this by trying different schemes to encourage attendees to use them, such as bikes being rented by the hour, but with variable results. However, there are still some businesses that face difficulties during the event. It was recognised that leaving the afternoons free may take some time to effect change. It was suggested that schedules and the full programme should be circulated to all businesses to allow them to plan.

The Friends of Keswick scheme will run again. A brochure "Enjoy Keswick" will be produced again through KTA and the Federation of Small Businesses.

There was some discussion about the naming of the new site. It was felt that "Keswick Convention Centre" was not appropriate as it is neither owned nor run by the town. Suggestions included "The Old Pencil Factory" or "Keswick Ministries Conference Centre".

There was also some discussion about the presence of armed police during the event. It was emphasised by staff from the Ministries that this was due to the numbers attending the event. However some concern was expressed about the public perception of the reasons that armed police were very visible in the town during the event. Private security firms had also been engaged during the 2018 event and this is likely to continue to assist with numbers of people attending.

Dates for the Convention in the next two years are as follows:

2019 13th July to 2nd August

2020 11th July to 31st July.

KESWICK TOURISM ASSOCIATION Council Representative – Councillor Paul Titley

Many of the activities of the KTA reflect the increasing domination of the digital world. The KTA remains the only promotional organisation that has a 100% focus on Keswick.

Membership has remained stable over the past 12 months. Members fall into four broad categories:

1. Accommodation Providers – an increase in enquiries, particularly from owners new to the area.
2. Attractions & Activity Providers – almost all local attractions are members but only the larger activity providers.
3. Trusted Supplier Scheme – a means for trades and services to join and take advantage of membership.
4. Retail and Eateries – this remains an issue with disappointing numbers particularly from cafes and restaurants.

In the past 12 months, there have been no major changes to what might be described as the 'Keswick Offer'.

The introduction of the Market Square webcam is believed to be the reason for the uplift in hits on Keswick.org from 3000/day to 6000 – 9000/day. (175,000 to the webcam page since the webcam went 'live' at the Xmas Lights switch on.)

The national press has covered the amount of fees taken by online booking sites. KTA is following this with a Facebook campaign to remind visitors to book direct with providers. The KTA has 10,000 validated email addresses to communicate directly with those interested in the area. Data indicates that almost 50% of these emails are opened by the recipients. This rises to 60% for those that respond to the blog.

KTA attends local and regional shows/exhibitions to meet other tourism businesses rather than individuals who want to visit the Lakes e.g. Lakes Hospitality Show, Group Travel and Leisure show (Birmingham). It is B2B (business to business meetings e.g. tour organisers, coach firms) that have the potential to sustain visitor numbers into Keswick and not B2C (business to customer meetings). The one exception being the Keswick Mountain Festival (B2C) to meet tourists who are already here to show them the breadth of places to go and things to do and spend on.

Longer term planning includes participating in the China Forum of 25 businesses to promote the North Lakes (i.e. as opposed to South Lakes) to Chinese visitors. Chinese tend to visit in small groups/families and spend far above average compared with others. This effort will take a few years before seeing a measurable effect.

KESWICK YOUTH CENTRE

Council Representative – Councillor Graham Kendall

Context

Young people in Keswick continue to have no permanent venue due to extensive flood damage in the 2009 floods and subsequent demolition of the Youth Centre on the Old Mill site.

Since then, various proposals have been considered by the Youth Centre Committee which have included elements of affordable housing as well as the sale of the Old Mill site and a move to a new site. The Trustees' primary objective remains to ensure that young people living in Keswick have a Youth Centre to meet the social, educational, developmental and health needs. Keswick Youth Centre trustees have been successful in a grant application to Allerdale BC.

Current Position

At the end of 2018, decisions were taken to:

- withdraw the Old Mill Site from sale
- develop a new youth centre on the Old Mill site
- use the grant allocation from Allerdale BC to develop plans for several dwellings plus a new multi-purpose youth centre in partnership with a local housing association
- appoint Day-Cummings Architects to draw up plans
- include an under-croft, subject to LDNP Planning regulations, to ameliorate the impact of potential future flooding; and
- review the Charitable Status of Keswick Youth Centre, with a view to becoming a Community Incorporated Organisation in the future.

Keswick Youth Centre Trustees currently expect to lodge a planning application in the next few weeks. This will include proposals for 2x two-bed flats, 2x one-bed flats and a two-bed house providing accommodation for people aged under 25. As well as the main youth centre hall, offices and storage, parking will be made available in the grounds and under-croft. It is anticipated that some parking permits will be available for local residents.

Once built, the Youth Centre will again represent a valuable local resource, making facilities available throughout the week to young people, and making a small but important contribution to the systemic housing challenges faced by younger people in the community. The Centre plans to employ a youth worker to engage and support young people from our community as well as support activities at the centre.

Funding

A substantial six figure financial commitment of support to develop youth centre services in Keswick (subject to the progress of the development project) has been secured. Applications for Capital Funding for the proposed Youth Centre and Housing will be made to the Community Housing Fund and Charitable Funds. The Youth Centre would welcome support developing further fundraising applications.

Community involvement

Several organisations providing services for young people in Keswick have indicated that they need suitable premises. The new premises will therefore meet the needs of multiple organisations supporting young people in Keswick.

Keswick Youth centre will also be supporting the development of a Keswick Plan for young people: a strategic plan to ensure all young people can access services to meet their individual needs.

ALLERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ward Representatives – Councillors Tony Lywood, Ron Munby and Martin Pugmire

No report submitted.

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

Ward Representative – Councillor Tony Lywood

No report submitted.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Lynda Walker – Town Clerk

The Town Council continues to meet monthly and meetings attract good levels of public attendance. Useful presentations take place before many meetings and subjects this year have included:

Keswick Conservation Area Appraisal

Keswick Mountain Festival Event

Penrith Road Flood Alleviation Project

West Cumbria UU Pipeline Project

Management of Thirlmere Reservoir for flood alleviation

‘Living Lakes’ Local Plan Review

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

The level of interest in the town is demonstrated by the number of nominations for the 12 seats on the Council for the May 2019 elections. Elections take place every four years and Keswick is divided into two wards – East (7 seats) and West (5 seats). A total of 18 nominations have been submitted for these 12 seats. Many parish and town councils struggle to secure enough nominations to fill the seats available. Following the Community Governance Review which was completed by Allerdale Borough Council early in the year, additional households will be included in Keswick Parish this year.

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.

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. A separate working group was set up during the year to consider and draft the Town Council’s response to the consultation on the Living Lakes Local Plan Review. Work on a Neighbourhood Plan for Keswick has been suspended during the Local Plan process to avoid areas of duplication – this will be resumed once the new Local Plan has been approved.

Work has now started on the Keswick Transport Study, a jointly funded project by Cumbria County Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Lake District National Park Authority and the Town Council to assess what is needed to improve the management of traffic and parking in the town.

The issue of car parking problems in Keswick was raised at the Town Meeting in April 2018 and a request for a strategic review to include both on and off street parking was made. The study is due to be completed with a report back in September 2019.

I am delighted that the ‘Pups’ clock situated on the Council buildings has now been restored to its former splendour with the support of United Utilities funding. This had been in poor condition for some time.

The Council continues to look after the War Memorial on Penrith Road which has been improved this year to include new paving.

A new Chain of Office for the Deputy Mayor was made especially for the Town Council by Brian Fulton of Keswick who also designed it. This was presented in June 2018 and is made of Fair Trade silver and carries a unique hallmark. The design is based on the Arts & Crafts movement and references Keswick School of Industrial Art.

The Town Council has engaged during the past year with local shop owners in a ‘town centre forum’ which seeks to prevent a large number of empty shop premises in the town.

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. New buildings have been completed at Hope Park during the year to provide a new workshop and much-needed staff facility and office base. Hope Park continues to be self-financing thanks to income from games and catering.

Fitz Park has finally recovered from the devastating flooding of Storm Desmond in 2015/16 thanks to a huge amount of work from staff and members of the Sports Clubs based there and grant funding. A new outdoor gym adds to the many activities available at Fitz Park, again thanks to funding from United Utilities.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Councillors who are stepping down for all their support and hard work during their term of office.