



KESWICK TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2009/10

Welcome to the Annual Report 2009/10

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 2010**

Contact Details

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS DIRECT OR VIA

THE COUNCIL OFFICES
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The offices are normally open from 9.30 am – 12.30 pm and from 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm Monday to Friday (closed Wednesday afternoons)

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 78091
Cllr D Miller	Linthwaite, Manor Brow, Keswick CA12 4AP	017687 72295
Cllr M Pugmire	6 Brandelhow 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 forum.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009-10

Councillor A Lysser – Town Mayor

Any review of the past year would highlight one event which had major implications not just for Keswick but for other towns in West Cumbria. I refer of course to the unprecedented flooding which occurred on 19th and 20th November 2009.

The Town Council had for some months been working with the Environment Agency, Keswick Flood Action Group and other local organisations and individuals to put together a Community Emergency Plan. The purpose of this was to help the town to be prepared for any major emergency which might arise and to assist recovery efforts. The Council Chamber had been identified as a possible Control Centre and a number of volunteers had indicated their willingness to assist.

On the morning of Thursday 19th November this room became fully operational as the hub of the flood rescue effort in Keswick for all the emergency and voluntary services. The phone lines rang constantly for the following week and the doors of the Council offices remained open 24/7 to provide a point of contact, control, comfort and assistance as necessary. I and my partner Ann witnessed first hand the terrific efforts put in by so many people as Keswick became the focus of the national press.

Once again the town demonstrated its tremendous community spirit and self sufficiency and thanks are due to all those who helped during the period of the flooding and its aftermath. One of the highlights of my Mayoral year was meeting Prince Charles and Julia Bradbury and being able to introduce them to many of the volunteers prior to the switching on of our Christmas lights, delayed by a week but vital in helping to show that Keswick was back in business.

Since then we have had a severe winter and major disruption to the town caused by road and pavement improvement works. The Town Council is working to ensure that these are completed as soon as possible with a minimum of disruption.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to report that the Town Council has become one of the first in the north of England to renew its 'Quality Council' status. The Quality Council Scheme is the only nationally recognised yardstick to measure a town council's effectiveness. Keswick was the first in Cumbria to be recognised in this way. Now, four years on, it is the first in the county to show that it still measures up.'

I was delighted on 27th March 2010 to officially open the new Fitz Park Childrens Play Area which I chose as my mayoral charity for the year. The new facility is a tremendous asset to the Park and demonstrates what can be achieved by partnership working. Thanks are due to all those who made donations and took part in fund raising activities.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Councillors for their support over the past year and all the staff for their hard work and commitment. I would especially like to thank my partner Ann for her unfailing support in the role of Mayoress.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mrs Lynda Walker - Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

As the Accounts for the year end have not yet been finalised the following figures provide an indication only of how the Town Council has performed and in some cases budget figures are provided pending confirmation of actual out-turn.

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY **1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010**

Expenditure

	£
General Administration (inc salaries)	30,996
Audit Fee (budget figure)	1,500
Newsletter	1,128
Mayors Allowance	1,823
Grants awarded	14,017
Christmas Lights	15,209
War Memorial	1,531
Townfield	847
Open Spaces	888
Fitz Park Deficit (budget figure)	99,840
Firework Display	3,888
Contingency	1,514
Floral Displays	4,464
Town Celebrations	1,472
Contribution to Commonwealth event	2,000
Quality status renewal	204
New office blinds	257
Derwentwater Foreshore Project contribution	1,000
Allotments	263
Total	182,841

Income

	£
Precept	174,798*
Interest	65
Fireworks Display	2,511
Rents	2,508
Event banner advertising space	100
Townfield reimbursement for damage	255
Town Celebrations	1,450
Total	181,687

* includes £42,637 concurrent grant from Allerdale BC

Provisional deficit £1,154

NB: Figures quoted are provisional pending final year end adjustments (including prepayments and accruals) and are subject to audit.

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 24 May 2010 to 21 June 2010 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 2009/10:

Keswick in Bloom	£2,500
1 st Keswick Scout Group	£2,720
Keswick Tourism Association	£ 900
Keswick Mountain Festival	£ 900
Theatre by the Lake	£3,000
PARCS scheme Play sessions	£ 180
Keswick Youth Club	£3,000
Keswick Out of School Club	£ 350
Music at Crosthwaite	£ 100
Citizens Advice outreach service	£ 350

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.

FITZ PARK SPORTS PAVILLION

Council Representative – Councillor A B 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 girls 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 the coaching of the junior section throughout the year. County games are now a regular fixture at Fitz Park together with many local finals and high profile exhibition games.

Football

The club successfully relocated to the Hospital field during the summer

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 September 2009 Fitz Park was central to the staging of all the events associated with the Commonwealth Mountain and Ultra Distance Championship

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 25 February 2010 is £ 55.49

OVERALL REVIEW

The pavilion facility is now 17 years old and continues to be well utilised throughout the year by the 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 (roof repairs £475 this year). 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 enhancements work at the front is scheduled for completion by 24th April 2010 and it is hoped to follow this up shortly after with a screened area at the rear for refuse bins etc.

KESWICK CIVIC SOCIETY

Council Representative – Councillor Duncan Miller

I try to join the small band of enthusiastic volunteers, led by Maysie McCambridge, at their meetings as often as I can.

The Society remains active in observing planning applications particularly relating to conservation areas and listed buildings.

I can happily report that a new edition of the Town Trail, edited and produced by the Society, has been distributed to local retailers. The Society is grateful to the Neighbourhood Forum for a grant of £500 towards the cost. Interest in the September Heritage Open Days remains strong.

There is concern within the committee that the Magistrates Court has remained empty and unused for some years. This has been followed up with a letter to the Chief Executive of the County Council.

Recent work of the Society has focused on the restoration of the Jonathan Otley Steps. Initially John Young and Cotswolds were approached and permission given to erect protective fencing around the structure. Finance, plans and permission are now under-way to restore the steps and surround them with new protective railings.

The Society has expressed concern over the future of the Ravensfield Home, the lack of Winter gritting, poor quality toilet provision in the town, the disruption caused by the road enhancement works and also the lack of improvement to the public realm in St. John Street.

KESWICK TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Council Representative – Councillor D Miller

This has been a year where a very close team working relationship has been maintained with the Council – November's floods, wintry conditions and roadworks have all called for a joint approach.

KTA has lobbied hard on our member's behalf to get roads gritted, bridges opened and roadworks finished on time or moved to the end of the year. Members have called into the KTA office regularly to make appeals for help on all these issues. Bookings in the early part of this year were definitely poor, with members feeling not very positive about the year ahead. This bad start to the year has not just affected Keswick; Cumbria Tourism report the same scenario across the Lake District. During the past couple of weeks however, bookings have looked up considerably and there are members reporting better summer bookings than last year which was generally considered a very good year for accommodation providers. We hope that this trend continues.

The aim of KTA this year is to re-brand and promote ourselves to both our members and our visitors and to place KTA as the officially recognized and respected tourism association for Keswick and the surrounding area. To this end, we have launched a new brand which we feel is contemporary and modern, and produced banners to take to local shows eg Borrowdale and Buttermere and to selected trade shows – we have just come back from a successful three days in Birmingham and the Outdoors Show.

Our new website is being progressed, with a launch date hopefully during May. Our existing website, although successful, is 4 years old and in need of a fresh look and feel.

Work is being progressed to promote Keswick as an Adventure Capital. A new Adventure Guide has been produced which attempts to link the consumer with an activity. The upstairs room at the Information Centre is to support the adventure theme in conjunction with the Lake District National Park, Cumbria Tourism and KTA. The Keswick Mountain Festival is set to be another success, with the new organizers working hard on a good programme of events and speakers. KTA continues to support and sponsor the event and will have a stand at the festival.

KESWICK YOUTH CLUB

Council Representative – Councillor David Etherden

Keswick Youth Club needs to redevelop their site as the existing building is rapidly becoming uneconomic to keep in operation.

Last year we thought significant progress had been made when we were finally given planning approval for redevelopment of the site to include new local housing and a new youth club.

However the permission was granted just after the sale of Sharp Edge Gallery which had been part of the application. This almost entirely is because of delays caused by the Environment Agency during the planning process. This means a further application will need to be made that excludes the Sharp Edge land. However the original partner Eden Housing have now withdrawn from the project citing issues of availability of grant funding.

Just when the Club thought things could not get any worse the November floods hit causing extensive damage to the Club and forcing the decision to close the Club until further notice.

The Committee is now trying to develop other options and partnerships for the redevelopment of the site. Perhaps it may be that United Utilities need to find a site for a new pumping station may be the way forward.

KESWICK AND DISTRICT FAIR TRADE CAMPAIGN

Council Representative – Councillor Lorraine Taylor

Keswick & District Fair trade campaign has had another very successful year both in activities and promoting fair-trade in Keswick.

Fairtrade fortnight in February 2009 saw activities centred on 'Go Bananas' involving local organisations including cubs, scouts and local primary schools.

In March 2009 Edition 11 of our Directory was published: *A Consumer Guide to Fairtrade in and around Keswick*. This listed almost 90 guest houses, hotels, B & Bs and hostels providing Fairtrade tea and coffee for their guests; 60 self-catering properties where Fairtrade tea and coffee is supplied for holiday makers; 50 local coffee and tea shops, restaurants, takeaways, pubs and bars where Fairtrade drinks are served to their customers, and 18 local shops selling a great range of Fairtrade and fairly traded products.

Keswick & District fair trade campaign have established a new website (www.fairtradekeswick.org.uk), designed and hosted by KCS, which provides information about activities and lists all providers of Fairtrade listed above.

Over the year 3 members of the committee gave 70 talks to over 2000 people, including many to schools in Cumbria, where the greatest growth in Fairtrade activities is now taking place.

Two very successful events organised by the Cumbria Fair Trade Network in January 2010 were held in Keswick. A Fairtrade Schools Conference was held in Keswick School: 90 children attended with over 30 members of staff. Harriet Lamb, Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation attended and gave an inspiring talk, and she gave the same message at greater length and in more detail to those who attended the AGM of the Network on the following day. This event, which was attended by over 120 people, and was opened by Roger Bingham, Chair of the County Council, was also held in Keswick School and those attending included Jamie Reed MP, the Deputy Mayor of Keswick, Martin Pugmire, Roger and Margaret Purkiss, and representatives of the WI, Soroptimists International, LDNPA, Cumbria County Council, the dioceses of Carlisle and Lancaster, Churches Together in Cumbria, and Fairtrade supporters from all over the County.

THE BATTERSBY TRUST

Council Representative – Councillor R Purkiss

The Battersby Trust is charged with looking after the Battersby Hall, its associated cottages and allotment for the educational benefit of residents of the town of Keswick.

The Trust's principal activity during the year has been continuing discussions with Eden Housing Association regarding their acquisition of the whole. This includes the Hall with integral residence, two semi-detached cottages and an allotment site.

It was originally anticipated that the Association would purchase the whole but due to their own financial considerations it seems that they will be restricted to the conversion of the Hall only into local occupancy accommodation. The Greta Playgroup which occupies half of the ground floor will be protected and will continue as is.

For the Trust itself it is obliged to replace the hall with an alternative hall. Discussions are on-going with a prospective location. The costs of this would be met from the sale of the properties and one cottage is currently on the market.

It is expected that substantial funds will remain after the acquisition/development of the new hall. This surplus would be invested and the income given as educational type grants for local people.

CUMBRIA THEATRE TRUST

Council Representative – Councillor Denstone Kemp

Summary

The budgeted surplus for the year has been revised downwards from £3,491 to £229. The Summer season main house audience average was 79% (forecast 70.5%) but the average Christmas audience was 70.6% (forecast 80.9%). The CTT acquired the head lease of the lakeside tea gardens from Allerdale B.C. together with a one-off endowment grant of £140,000, all of which is to replace ABC's annual contribution. The lease expires in 2013.

Finance

Income from The Maid of Buttermere showed a net surplus of £17,845. The provisional result for the Summer Season shows a net surplus of £361,337. The provisional income for Grimm Tales and Ghost Stories shows a net surplus of £87,204. As stated, the projected budget surplus is revised downwards largely because of direct and indirect effects of the adverse weather events of 19 November to mid-January. The rest of the downturn is attributable to increased expenditure and decreased trading income & contributions offset by the greater than budgeted surpluses from the performances.

Funding

The Arts Council for England has confirmed a grant of £517,958 for 2010/11, an increase of 10% over the current year. This grant is conditional on Cumbria County Council maintaining its grant at least at the present level of £37,000. This is still to be agreed by CCC. The re-organisation of the ACE means the current system of support for regularly funded organisations (RFO) is likely to change from 2012 with a small portfolio of key organisations enjoying greater security in return for delivering clearly defined objectives. All other RFOs would be funded on an annual basis but with a lesser degree of security. CTT must ensure that it is included in the "top tier" of RFOs.

The one-off "endowment" grant of £140,000 from Allerdale B.C (which replaces the annual grant) is due to take effect from April 2010, subject to agreement on conditions of use. As of today there is no agreement reached and discussions are continuing.

KESWICK ROAD SAFETY ACTION GROUP

Council Representative - Councillor Miss E D Barraclough

The Road Safety Group has been wound up, latterly the group was a minor partner in organising Road Safety events run by the Police and Fire Services. These events will probably continue without the Road Safety Group. When the group was first set up we were hoping to get a training area in Keswick for young people to teach the Highway Code and road sense. It proved to be too difficult and too expensive to find a suitable piece of land so we ended up being a publicity group. The balances of funds have been transferred to the Civic Society to be used to preserve the Jonathan Otley Steps.

KESWICK IN BLOOM

Council Representative - Councillor Miss E D Barraclough

Competitions

Keswick once again won the small towns category in Cumbria in Bloom and, as a result has been selected to go forward as one of the County entries to Britain in Bloom. Our secretary, Chris Knowles, is working very hard to make Keswick entry as competitive as possible. The Royal Horticultural Society run the Britain in Bloom event and have widened the judging areas to include environmental aspects and heritage. We will be using the work of other organisations in the Town to support our bid in particular the work of SusKes with the new allotments and the Civic Society and their Town Trail as an example of 'heritage'. Involvement with the schools through the St Herberts Gardening Club and all the schools with the painting competition will enhance our effort. The Town Centre, which should be the showpiece of the Town, is a problem unless the judging is on Market Day, any businesses in the Market Square could give us a boost by putting up hanging baskets.

Projects

Tithebarn Street bed will this summer be planted with flowering shrubs as well as summer bedding to give it a more permanent look. The area outside Hope Park north of the footpath has been cleared and planted with rhododendrons and azaleas and underplanted with native daffodils making the whole of this space a real delight for visitors and residents.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Council Representative - Councillor Miss E D Barraclough

Neighbourhood Forum has taken a back seat since the floods in November as Pat Ackred, the Community Officer, has been providing advice and support to people who suffered in the floods. Experts have come to Keswick to help with flood prevention measures and give advice on insurance.

The Forum has been held in different venues, eg the Millfield care home where we had a talk on the archive service. Also at that meeting we had a grant application to support the making of music/video and had a demonstration. The next meeting is on

Tuesday 27th April in the Convention Centre with a talk from Simon Overend of the Convention.

Neighbourhood Forum continues to provide small grants particularly for groups setting up a new venture, it is not there to provide regular funding each year.

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL
Ward Representative - Councillor Miss E D Barraclough

The elections of June 2009 brought a change in the make-up of the Council, Labour lost seats and both the Conservatives and the liberal Democrats gained seats. An attempt was made to form a three party coalition but the share offered to the Liberal Democrats was not appropriate to their size and was turned down. So, at least until after the General Election, we have a coalition of Conservatives - the largest party - and Labour.

The major projects that are going ahead are Waste Disposal and the Carlisle Northern Relief Road. Two Mechanical Biological Treatment plants will be built one in Carlisle, which is already under construction, and one in Barrow. The road works are already started but completion is some time off.

Education is seeing substantial sums being invested both in Academies and now major investment in schools in West Cumbria has just been announced.

There are plans for the replacement of Ravensfield Care Home but not within the next few years. The future of Ravensfield is still under discussion because of the danger of flooding, I have been assured that to close Ravensfield would be a Key decision, the implication is that due notice has to be given and consultation must take place before it goes to the CC Cabinet. No steps have yet been taken to start this process.

Highways

The normal work of county highways, particularly in our area has been put back because of all the damage done by the floods and then ice and snow. The future organisation of the highways operation is under discussion as the contract with Capita, for the administrative and design side, ends early in 2011 and the Amey contract ends in early 2012. This gives an opportunity for a complete rethink of the operation which is happening at the moment.

Devolution

Lip service is still being paid to getting decisions made nearer to the people it affects. In our area we are making some progress through the Derwent 7 group representing the 7 parishes round Keswick but we are relying on funding from ACT and the National Park for administrative help but so far have had no funding from the CC or Allerdale. However Derwent 7 is being recognised as a body that can represent the local community so CC and Allerdale officers will come and consult us and pay attention to our ideas.

Nuclear Issues

The CC as the strategic planning authority for Cumbria is fully embroiled in the issues surrounding Nuclear New Build, Geological Disposal Facility and Low Level Waste. At present the only 'volunteers' for the high level waste are Copeland and Allerdale in Cumbria, a Board has been set up with the two District Councils, the National Park Authority, the County Council and British Energy Coast West Cumbria to coordinate policy on all these issues. The impression is of huge uncertainty on the way forward and vast quantities of spent nuclear fuel which could be reprocessed if there were reactors that could use it. No clear way forward on geological or any other kind of disposal and yet the need to provide nuclear power.

Police Authority

The CC has 9 members who serve on the Police Authority along with 8 appointed independent members. The task of the PA is to hold the Constabulary to account through oversight of the policing plan and the budget. We should ensure that the policing needs of the community are met. What the PA cannot do is interfere with operational matters.

KEY PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

2009/10 has been another busy year for the Town Council. A major achievement was renewal of Quality Status with a presentation by the Chairman of CALC prior to the December 2009 meeting.

As well as playing a major role in the emergency response to the flooding in November 2009, the Council has continued to support the Flood Recovery Group meetings which have been chaired by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and continue to take place on a fortnightly basis. The Council has also agreed to act as the accountable body for the Flood Recovery Group in relation to £50,000 funding from Allerdale BC to deliver a Flood Action Plan.

The Christmas lights switch on was an important event as it was the sign that the town was open for business again and we were very grateful to HRH the Prince of Wales who agreed to join Julia Bradbury in carrying this out during his post-flooding visit to the area.

The Council has worked in partnership with Suskes during the year to provide a site for allotment gardens at the Hawthorns on Penrith Road in view of the large demand for more allotments in the town. Work is ongoing to prepare the site for cultivation and it is hoped that a larger site will become available in the future.

The Town Council continues to remain active in the Derwent 7 Parishes cluster with representation on the Housing, Youth, Environment and Transport Groups as well as the Steering Committee.

Councillors provided a surgery facility on the town's market square during the year and will be repeating the exercise on a regular basis

Ongoing consultation took place on planning applications, highways issues etc

The annual firework display was once again funded by the Town Council and facilitated by Keswick Rugby Club.

Cleaning of the War Memorial was carried out at the end of October to provide a facelift prior to the Remembrance Day service.

Floral displays were again provided around the town in conjunction with Keswick In Bloom

The major part of the Town Council's expenditure supports Fitz Park which suffered badly as a result of the flooding but is now on the way to recovery thanks to grant funding from the Rotary Club and Cumbria Community Foundation. Thanks are due to these organisations for their support.

The Council continues to meet regularly 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 the residents of and visitors to Keswick. .