



ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24

Welcome to the Town Council's Annual Report for 2023/24

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

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

**Vivien Little
Town Clerk
April 2024**

Contact Details

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS DIRECT OR VIA

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Cumbria
CA12 5JS

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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

Cllrs	Email address:	
Cllr Louise Dunn	louise.dunn@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Steve Harwood	steve.harwood@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Chris Houghton	chris.houghton@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Claire Houghton	claire.houghton@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
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Cllr Sally Lansbury	sally.lansbury@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
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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 six gardening and maintenance staff employed in Keswick Parks):

Ms Vivien Little, Town Clerk

Mrs Catherine Parker, Responsible Financial Officer

Miss Ania Mlynczak, Administration & Finance Assistant

The Council meets 12 times per year, on the third Thursday of each month, and holds its Annual Meeting during May. It also meets separately in its capacity as Trustee of the Hope Park, Fitz Park and Townsfield Charitable Trusts 6 times per year with an Annual Trust meeting, also during May. All meetings are advertised on the Council's website www.keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk 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. Both the Town Council and Trust meetings are held at 7pm in the Council Chamber, 50 Main Street, Keswick.

CHAIR'S REPORT 2023-24

Councillor Steve Harwood – Town Mayor

The year started with 7 new Town Councillors following the May elections and 5 re-elected for the next 4 year term. For the first time this resulted in an equal number of men and women Councillors which has had a positive benefit in decision making reflecting the population balance in the town. This resulted in my continuing as Mayor for a second year with a new Deputy Mayor, Rob Nelson, bringing a new enthusiasm to the events organised by the Town Council for the benefit of the town throughout the year.

This also coincided with major Local Government Reorganisation with the new Cumberland Council replacing the former district Councils of Allerdale, Copeland and Carlisle. Markus Campbell-Savours was elected as the sole Keswick representative on the new Council. This has proved to be a challenging year as the new Cumberland Council has been finding its feet and resolving its new management structures.

There have been a number of key issues which has focussed the attention of all Councillors throughout the year :-

- The ongoing development of future plans for our award winning parks. Work has now started on a new building to provide staff accommodation and parks equipment storage at Upper Fitz Park with a planned extension and renovation of the kiosk to provide improved facilities for Cafe HNW and parks games management.
- Events organised for the benefit of the local community and visitors have been given a new impetus through innovations by Rob Nelson with the addition of the popular Bee Unique children's activities at the Pop and Proms event in Fitz Park, to be further developed with the renamed Party in the Park this year. The ongoing success of Scruffs Dog Show with the help of Podgy Paws which battled through a torrential rain storm part way through but still left everyone smiling. This was followed in November with the best Christmas Lights switch on ever with the '3 Dads Walking' doing the honours.
- The underused Leisure Centre which retains a Gym but no swimming pool remains a concern. Ongoing discussions have been held with the new Cumberland Council on future plans against the background of acute financial constraints imposed on Local Government agencies and we continue to press for a resolution.
- We have been challenging the National Park Authority policy on approving a large number of applications for Change of Use from Guest Houses to Holiday lets with no on site management retained for the past 3 years. This followed reports of anti social behaviour in these new situations. In March 2024 we had the first positive acceptance of our case when an application was refused

permission and we continue our ongoing dialogue with the Planning Authority on what we hope is a turning point.

- A new Housing Action group is being formulated to engage with interested parties on all issues relating to the ongoing issue of providing affordable local needs housing in association with Keswick Community Housing Trust.
- We continue to use the expertise of Sally Lansbury and our office team to look at ways of reducing our carbon footprint on all the Council's activities.
- We maintain links with all the voluntary groups who do so much to help those in need, flood protection and prevention, youth and sports provision for all ages and bringing colour to the town.
- The uplifting day of the year was the awarding of the Freedom of Keswick to Kerry Irving against the backdrop of the now famous Max the Miracle Dog statue in Hope Park and his Orange army of supporters. He continues to act as a true ambassador for Keswick raising money for the Great North Air Ambulance and Hope Park whilst also raising awareness of mental health issues.

I would also like to thank the Keswick Reminder for allowing me to do a monthly report to inform the townspeople of current issues. To conclude I would like to express my personal thanks to the Office and Parks Teams, and my fellow Councillors, who do so much unrecognised work on behalf of the town and for keeping me on track throughout the year.

Councillor Steve Harwood, Mayor of Keswick

PARKS TRUST CHAIR'S REPORT 2023-24

Councillor Jean Murray

It's been an eventful year for the Parks, with a number of initiatives being started and others planned for future development over the short, medium and long term. It was helpful for myself, Chris Houghton (Deputy Trust Chair), Town Clerk, Finance Officer and Park Staff to meet together in November to discuss our shared visions for the future development of Fitz Park, Hope Park, and Townsfield.

It was a very productive day, with many valuable ideas and suggestions for how we move forward.

This was followed by a meeting in January of the Trustees which was dedicated to the same issue, and was again productive and fruitful.

These Ideas and Development days have produced a blueprint for the future development of the Parks and are currently being drawn up into a three stage plan of short, medium and long term goals for how we take this forward within a framework to be agreed by Trustees.

Allied to this, there has been a long term plan to address the replacement of the storage containers behind Cafe HNW in Fitz Park. These are used to store expensive mechanical equipment for use in all 3 Parks, and were outdated, delapidated and no longer fit for purpose. Additionally, the working facilities for Parks staff in this area is insufficient, with no drying area for wet weather gear, poor toilet provision and poor accommodation for lunches and breaks.

Plans were drawn up for new facilities to be built in this area, with work on the storage areas currently under way. The improved facilities for staff will be developed as part of the plans for Stage 2 of this plan, which includes improvements to the Café premises. The details of this development have yet to be finalised, with a couple of options being discussed at the present time.

Special thanks must go to Councillor Steve Harwood for his dedicated work on this project, and his professional expertise in drawing up the necessary plans. He has also taken the lead role in negotiating and securing appropriate contactors to carry out the works required.

We will have to consider how we finance Stage 2 of the development, and it is likely that we will be applying for grants and finance options in order to take this forward. The redevelopment of this part of the site necessitated the felling of two diseased Western Hemlock trees, which was undertaken in February this year, shortly before the ground work for the new facilities was commenced. As is Trust policy, the wood from the trees will be used by Park staff around the Parks for construction projects. It is Trust Policy to plant 3 new trees for every tree which has to be felled, and the wood is used for repair and construction work within all three Parks.

Staffing

There have been some changes in Parks staffing in the last 12 months. Following the retirement of a long standing member of staff, a review of staffing was undertaken, and we have appointed two new members of staff, one full time, and one part time.

Particular thanks must go to the Parks Manager Christine, and all of the staff for their dedication, hard work and enthusiasm in maintaining and developing all three Parks, often in very challenging conditions, particularly given the atrocious weather conditions we have experienced so far this year.

Accolades such as the Gold Awards for Hope Park from Cumbria in Bloom are not given lightly, and are testament to the often unseen work which goes on, day in and day out, to keep our Parks to such a high standard.

Carbon Neutral Policy

The Trust has a Policy of working towards a Carbon Neutral position within the Parks, and to this end, we have considered all developments carefully, with this issue in mind.

When Parks machinery has to be replaced, we are replacing petrol or diesel driven machines with electric machinery, where the technology allows this to be done. This is always a more expensive option, and this has to be carefully considered, but where it is feasible, this will continue to be our priority. We now use environmentally friendly petrol in all our vehicles, although again this is at greater cost.

Parks staff have moved to environmentally friendly treatments, such as weed killers and fertilisers, again at greater cost, but Trustees are confident that this is the direction we should be moving in.

We will continue to consider carefully the environmental impact of all the work that is undertaken within the Parks, as matter of priority.

Elizabeth's Wood

The area of Fitz Park by Hospital Field has started to be developed in a joint initiative between Parks Staff and Sustainable Keswick, and has involved a number of local people in planting hundreds of new trees and plants. This area is intended to be an unmanaged natural area, with access for the public for quiet enjoyment and nature study. Some environmentally friendly seating will be provided, and some unmanaged pathways will be created for ease of access. This is a legacy project, which will develop naturally over coming years and hopefully be a valuable asset to residents and visitors in the long term future.

Current issues

There remain some operational issues which are ongoing and will need to be resolved in the short/medium term.

There are many organisations and Sports Clubs who use the Parks on a regular and ongoing basis, such as the Football Club, The Bowling Club, and the Cricket Club, which currently has plans for development, supported by KTC.

The Park Run in Fitz Park is proving enormously popular with visitors from far and wide travelling to participate. The current issue is the lack of toilet facilities for those participating in this event and is something that the Town Council is considering how to address, with other responsible bodies, such as LDNPA and Cumberland Council.

An increasing problem is the amount of litter and rubbish collected within the Parks, which the Trust has to pay for to dispose of, calculated by weight.

Initiatives to encourage visitors to take their litter with them, or to deal with this issue in a different way will need to be considered.

In conclusion, I would like to offer my appreciation and thanks to Chris Houghton, Deputy Chair, and Vivien, Catherine and Ania, for their superb support and assistance throughout the year, and particularly earlier this year, during my

unplanned absence, when they ensured that everything continued to run smoothly and efficiently.

Councillor Jean Murray, Chair, Keswick Parks Charitable Trusts

FINANCIAL REPORT

Catherine Parker – Responsible Financial Officer

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Expenditure	£
General Admin (Including Salaries)	80,899.00
Mayors Allowance	2,000.00
Grants Awarded	18,583.00
Christmas Lights*	30,363.00
War Memorial	1,523.00
Townsfeld	1,803.00
Open Spaces	1,000.00
Fitz Park	193,574.00
Floral Displays	507.00
Town Events inc Scruffs	6,773.00
Allotments	350.00
Advertising	106.00
Audit Fee/Accounts Preparation	25.00
Contingency Sum	833.00
Annual Parish Meeting	71.00
CCTV Annual Maintenance - PCC	3,600.00
Elections 2023	2,364.00
Total	344,974.00

Income	£
Precept	328,45.00
Grant to Fitz Park (ABC)	20,000.00
Walker Park – Rent	14,130.00
Allotment Income	964.00
Townsfeld & Bank Interest	55.00
Keswick Events Contributions	2,538.00
Christmas Lights Contributions	2020.00
CCLA Investment Interest	1,692.00
Total	369,644.00

**Plus £2,553 from Christmas Lights Fund & Events Fund*

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 2023/24:

Citizens Advice Allerdale	£500.00
Crosthwaite Church	£325.00
Keswick Area Food Share	£1,000.00
Keswick Emergency Recovery Partnership (KCERP)	£5,825.00
Keswick Cricket Club	£500.00
Keswick in Bloom	£2,750.00
1st Keswick Scouts Group	£2,000.00
Keswick Swifts	£500.00
Keswick Youth Centre Services	£3,605.00
St Herbert's CE Primary and Nursery School	£1,391.00
Theatre by the Lake	£2000.00
Total:	£18,583.00

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 Steve Harwood

In May 2023 I joined the Battersby Hall Trustees as the Keswick Town Council representative in place of Tony Lywood. The trust comprises 6 members with Rev. Charles Hope as Chair, George Page as Secretary, John Hayes on behalf of Keswick Rotary as Treasurer, Nigel Hale on behalf of Keswick Lions, Brenda Mumford on behalf of St. Johns PCC and myself.

The principle asset of the Battersby Hall Trust is the ownership of the Moot Hall, which was purchased in 2018 following the sale of the original Battersby Hall Library buildings. This is currently leased to the Lake District National Park Authority and operates as a Tourist Information Centre on the ground floor. The current lease runs until 31 March 2026 with negotiations ongoing for a future extension of the lease.

The Trust derives an income from investments over the years and the rental income from the Moot Hall. The main aim of the Trust is the provision and maintenance of a building for the education and use of the inhabitants of Keswick to improve conditions of life for the local population. It has the power to give grants to individuals, charities and non profit making organisations compatible with its aims, with education as the main objective. Over the past year the income has been used in the following areas :-

- Provision of educational grants to support families in need attending Keswick School. 98 families (140 children) have benefited in the current academic year.
- Support grants for post 16 Keswick School leavers (8This year)
- Support grants to local primary schools - St. Herbert's, Bassenthwaite, Braithwaite, Threlkeld and Borrowdale.
- Specific individual grants on application from schools.
- Educational lectures organised by Keswick Lecture Society.

Throughout the year an extensive programme of repairs and restoration works have been carried out to the exterior of the Moot Hall at a cost of approx. £130K. These were largely completed but in the winter last year storm damage was suffered to the historic weathervane at the top of the tower. This has been the subject of an insurance claim. Its reinstatement is proving to be a long and complicated process with scaffolding remaining on the side of the building for a prolonged period and a challenge for our local contractors. The weathervane has now been fully reinstated. It is planned for the historic clock to be repaired which has been out of action

awaiting completion of this work. With some low level painting to finish off, as weather permits, this will complete the programme of renovation works on the Moot Hall.

KESWICK IN BLOOM
Council Representative – Councillor Benita Laphorn

Keswick in Bloom have continued to work towards our aims to encourage the improvement of our surroundings through the imaginative use of trees, shrubs, flowers and landscaping and we hope also to have played a part in creating an attractive and sustainable environment.

1. Planting Displays: -

Once the usual May dry spell was over the summer season was kind and we had no issues with watering. In the mangers on Bell Close the trailing begonias and geranium gave a good display throughout the summer with no watering required. If anything, there was too much rain for some of our planters but most did well and the begonias in the KESWICK sign at the junction of Chestnut Hill with the Hawthorns gave a good display. Unfortunately, the Box hedging appears to have succumbed to Box blight. We have cut back hard in the hope that it might recover but finding solutions will be a project for the next couple of years.

2. Lake Road: -

Following completion of the Fairtrade Bed the last few weeks of 2023 were spent cutting back, weeding, and tidying up. Permission was given to fell the dead Cherry tree and we have contacted Christine (Parks) for some advice. We reviewed Vron's original plans for the beds and most of the rhododendrons and azaleas are still thriving with the early rhododendron already flowering. The snowdrops and Rotary crocuses are appearing and the Lent lilies look to be doing better this year. It is difficult to tell if the slate chippings on "dog poo corner" have deterred our canine friends, no doubt we will find out when we start working in that area.

3. Finances: -

In May we received the grant from the Town Council and along with some generous donations our finances continue to be healthy. The Underpass projects are underway and the new liners for the Bell Close mangers worked reasonably well once we had drilled more drainage holes.

The one outstanding expense is the cutting of the Beech hedge on Penrith Road. Hopefully the farmer who cut it for us will bill us soon.

4. Volunteers: -

We have 22 people on our mailing list of which at most 12 are actively engaged with the group. Of the rest a few have been members in the past but are not able to garden and the rest we hope will find ways to engage in the future.

5. Plan for 2024:-

Our gardening season starts again in March and this year we are going to get together as a group and jointly agree a plan of the key priorities we would like KIB to achieve in 2024.

05/04/2024

Tricia Horner- Secretary

Jenny Forbes- Chair

KESWICK COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP
Council Representative – Councillor Sally Lansbury

The Organisation:

KCERP is a registered charity, and volunteer-led organisation, with a part-time project manager whose role is currently largely funded (300 hours per annum) by Keswick Town Council. The main focus is to support Keswick's residents during and following a potential flooding scenario. Our emergency plan also covers a number of other situations such as power outages and pandemic, which are updated according to the risks identified on Cumbria's Community Risk Register.

Achievements since the last report:

- Claire Peat was appointed as a new project manager (PM) in February 2023, taking over from Kimberley Ward, who left in April 2023.
- We have appointed a new trustee, Chris Simms, who has experience with the Environment Agency, so can provide invaluable insight to the board.
- Grant funding was approved from CiFR (Cumbria innovative flood resilience), allowing us to:
 - Upgrade outdated IT
 - Replenish sandbag stores
 - Recruit for a lengthman, to help reduce the risk of surface water flooding in the town
- The annual leaflet for householders is printed, and due to go out in November to all residential addresses with a CA12 postcode.
- KCERP has engaged with the local holiday cottage offices to request an electronic copy is sent to their CA12 owners, and they have a plan for their visitors.
- The KCERP trustees and Town Councillors, attended the Mountain Rescue base to tour the new multi-agency response area, and consider how the community response runs alongside the emergency services.
- The PM attended a resilience workshop organized by Cumbria's Resilience Network (part of both Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Councils) to inform planning and enable networking with other agencies involved in the resilience/recovery process.

Ongoing Challenges:

- Cumberland has not yet announced a replacement for the Flood and Development Manager who retired in 2024. We are updating the plan with relevant contacts in the Highways and Flooding Departments .
- Some of Keswick’s volunteer organisations have ceased to operate, leaving some gaps in the emergency response. For example, the WI used to support the Mountain Rescue base during ongoing emergencies. KCERP is updating their list of volunteers to include wet/dry volunteers, and ensure there is support for the emergency services as well as for the residents.
- Thankfully, we have not had a full-scale emergency since the completion of the Mountain Rescue Base’s extension. This however means we haven’t yet tested how we will work with “Silver Command” operating from the MRT base, and Keswick’s volunteers working from an operational command centre in the Council Chambers. The plan needs to be updated, and a live simulation run to test the plan and communication. Funding has been secured for this, but no date is yet confirmed.
- Following a flood, we’ve previously used space in the Skiddaw St building owned by Keswick Ministries. They have a new facilities manager, and it’s not currently clear whether they will evacuate themselves to Skiddaw St given the flood risk at the old pencil mill. PM liaising with Keswick Ministries to clarify.
- Although the winter storms didn’t result in any serious flood events for our area, our response was tested during storms Isha and Jocelyn in January. Information flow about the ongoing situation from the strategic teams did not flow naturally back to KCERP. Thankfully our elected Cumberland Councillor passed on the information as he received it, and we were able to discuss the situation with the Environment Agency as the storms developed. We continue to request improved communications from the strategic meetings.

Ongoing work:

- We continue to recruit and train volunteers with around 15 new volunteers having signed up following the recent campaign. Training and refresher sessions will be ongoing through the Winter months. We would like to produce a quick reference guide for all volunteers, so if they cannot attend training, they can know when to respond in various scenarios.
- Lead volunteers have been trained on the new radios and revisited roles and brought further suggestion to procedures.
- Our confidential list of vulnerable householders who may require additional assistance have all been contacted to introduce the new PM, and discuss their current situation and needs. New householders may be added following the leaflet campaign.
- A close working relationship with the Flood Action Group is being fostered to ensure information sharing, and streamlined working with external agencies such as the EA.

- The Community Emergency Plan is being revised to include data-driven action triggers, and expanded to cover the higher risk of power outages. The PM will attend a power outage scenario in 2024 run by Cockermonth to inform Keswick's planning.
- Additional Grant funding for 2024 if available via CiFR, and spending priorities have been discussed with the board of trustees.

KCERP thanks the Council for its ongoing support to the project.

KESWICK AND DISTRICT FAIR TRADE COMMITTEE Council Representative – No representative

Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign is managed by a small committee: this year we were joined by Kelvin Rushworth whose experience and energy is already proving valuable.

At our AGM in June 2023, Joanna Pollard, Chair of Lancashire Fairtrade, gave an inspiring illustrated talk entitled *Ghana: the past and present of fair trade*. Joanna visited the first fair trade town in Africa in October 2022 and supported the community through the work of *Chocolate Has a Name*. She spoke with passion, and her talk demonstrated to us her energy and commitment. She started by looking at the involvement of Britain in the slave trade: signs of the horrors involved are retained; a salutary reminder of the beginnings of our relationship with West Africa. She continued this theme of exploitation with images of the surplus clothes from the UK which are sold in markets in Ghana: what is often left are piles of discarded polyester- effectively plastic - which ends up at landfills and in bodies of water, polluting entire ecosystems.

When it comes to chocolate, she gave us figures: 32 million families in Ghana are dependent on growing cocoa and the average amount earned by a Ghanaian cocoa farmer is £280 per year. Out of £20 we pay for chocolate, the farmer receives £1. The Fairtrade price and premium go some way to ameliorate this shocking statistic. Fairtrade is also helping cocoa farmers with the challenges of climate change: as Joanna put it, the weather has turned upside down, with rain and dry weather exchanging seasons.

Joanna's engagement with the communities she has met and befriended in Ghana is also directed at helping them, especially the children, become more aware of the part that chocolate making could play in their lives. Most people in cocoa growing communities cannot afford to buy chocolate for their children. The aim of *Chocolate has a Name* is to use cocoa as a creative tool in building an equitable economy. It encourages the learning of chocolate making and the incorporation of the story of chocolate into the curriculum. This initiative helps all those involved to place value on their product.

We think it important to remind those looking for presents or treats at Christmas about the availability of Fairtrade. This year, thanks to the creativity and hard graft of our Chair, Bernadette Fagan, we had an eye-catching and appealing presence at two events. As usual we had a Fairtrade stall at the Victorian Fayre on December 3rd. The low sun and the sharp cold provided an appropriate setting for this cheerful and wonderfully well attended event. Our stall was well stocked with attractive and fairly traded goods from the Caldbeck One World Shop whose mission is to make the world a fairer place through selling goods sustainably and fairly trade from around the world. We talked to people about the continued importance of Fairtrade for farmers in the developing world, and Bernadette offered Fairtrade gingerbread to children passing by the stall.

Bernadette also created a tree for the Southey Street Methodist Festival. I am biased, but I thought it stood out with its simplicity and clear message from some of the other rather more extravagantly decorated trees. Our third endeavour was to set up a table at Booths for one morning with Fairtrade goods available for purchase in the store, focusing on wine and chocolates. Booths has a choice of Fairtrade wines from Chile, Argentina and South Africa at reasonable prices, and a wonderfully enticing choice of chocolates. Two brands new to us, Whitakers and Beeches, offered especially appealing boxes.

We have had a flower bed in Hope Park which displays the Fairtrade logo for many years. In recent times the logo became less apparent, so we decided to ask Keswick in Bloom to create another bed for us, which they have done: it is just at the bottom of Lake Road opposite Fine Design. We decided that a sign would help to draw the attention of passers-by to the bed. Tom Rennie, our much-valued treasurer, applied for assistance from the Town Council and you gave us a donation of £150 to help us to pay for the slate sign we are having made by Conniston Stonecraft. We plan to hold a gathering there, probably in June.

Meanwhile, Anne Baird keeps our presence on social media up to date with flair and commitment. We also have a short and powerful advertisement appearing at every showing at the Alhambra Cinema.

Jo Alberti, Secretary, Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign

KESWICK FLOOD ACTION GROUP
Council Representative – Councillor Louise Dunn
Councillor Chris Houghton

First formed in 2005, KFAG has accomplished a great deal including improvements in river flood defences, surface water management, culvert improvement, gravel removal, sewage system upgrades and re-enforcement of the 'wave wall' at Thirlmere reservoir. The team also has great expertise on flood modelling and reservoir safety.

The group's expertise on flood prevention in Keswick is vital to the ongoing dialogue with United Utilities and the Environment Agency over flood prevention measures. Keswick is extremely lucky to have such a group of highly knowledgeable, skilled people working on flood prevention.

Key developments and points to note:

- **Improved co-ordination between K FAG and Keswick Community Emergency Recovery Partnership (KCERP).** The local groups concerned with flooding and emergency response are working together more closely than KCERP/K FAG have previously. [K FAG](#)'s focus is on flood prevention and lobbying for policy measures. [KCERP](#) prepare for and plan the emergency response which will help the town recover from an emergency event (including but not limited to flooding).
- **Impact of social media:** Increased usage of social media channels such as Facebook (K FAG Facebook page has 1.4K members) has been very helpful in the dissemination of information to the community. Information from the various agencies (EA, Met office) is being disseminated directly to the community with expert commentary from Lynne Jones of K FAG and Claire Peat of KCERP during storm events and this information channel is proving very effective. The two-way nature of social media also means that members of the community can keep each other and K FAG/KCERP informed by sharing information and videos of flooded areas etc.

Items of major concern to K FAG:

- **Keswick remains at high risk of flooding events.** The K FAG team is amazed Keswick has had such a (relatively) stress-free winter. So many storms and the rest of the country has been well soaked almost daily. However Keswick remains at high risk of a flood event and K FAG continues to lobby for measures that will prevent a major incident.
- **Reduction in funding for various agencies:** The council and EA have had major cuts to funding which is impacting flood prevention activity. For a local example, the maintenance of waterways is being reduced. There is also concern about an associated reduction in local knowledge and expertise relating to drains, waterways and culverts. The lengths man position (funded by a grant from CiFR/CCF) will go some way to addressing this. It is also proving difficult to arrange meetings with the EA over reservoir safety and their modelling.
- **A full catchment area approach is needed but Thirlmere remains key to protecting Keswick:** Tree planting projects and wetland management is welcome but is largely insignificant to Keswick's flood risk as the volumes of water they hold are a tiny fraction of the water flow in an event such as Desmond in 2015. Slowing the flow is helpful but K FAG's view is that managing the peak flows with significant upstream storage is the only real short term solution.

- **Thirlmere:** K FAG’s belief is that the management of water levels and the availability of ‘storm space’ to capture excess water remains the single most important factor in protecting Keswick from flood. K FAG analysis indicates that damage to Keswick caused by Storm Desmond could have been reduced or prevented by an improved water management regime at Thirlmere. K FAG has been lobbying relentlessly for legislation to manage the reservoir for flood prevention – with no success to date. Without this legislation...
- **Flood prevention is not the priority for UU at Thirlmere:** Many of the objections to greater water discharges from Thirlmere at times of high flood risk relate to environmental damage and habitat (for which UU is fined by the regulator). These are undoubtedly important, however the environmental, social and financial damage caused by a major flood event arguably poses a far greater threat, but is not part of the equation (as floods attract no liability for UU as an ‘act of god’).

Areas for attention of Councillors:

- **Information flow during an emergency situation.** The processes and information flow within "Gold Command" is clearly defined: strategic teleconferences, regular updates from Met office/EA/Emergency services etc. However the link to K FAG and KCERP is not written into a process anywhere nor are the contact details up to date. Luckily, Cumberland Cllr Markus Campbell- Savours reached out to KCERP so the gap was filled, but a more formal information cascade needs to be implemented. Cockermouth's ERG have the same issue. The issue has been flagged several times and no solution found. *Proposal: KTC writes formally to Gold Command leadership to request a formal cascade to local Town Councils and voluntary groups concerned with flood risks are formally incorporated into the information cascade in their standard operating procedures.*
- **Information updates from Cumberland post reorganisation.** Key people left during the re-organisation to the Unitary authority and new contacts are still not clear. *Proposal: KTC writes formally to Cumberland Council along with K FAG and KCERP outlining key roles for which we do not have contacts, asking for clarification for flood preparation measures and emergency responses.*

Action for local residents:

- Report blocked drains and culverts to Cumberland Council via their Highways [web page](#)– the more people that report a drains issue, the more likely it is to be addressed. https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/streets-roads-and-pavements/road-maintenance-closures-and-improvements/report-problem-street-or-road/flooding-blocked-gullies-and-drains?fbclid=IwAR2mn2MkoydxkO2bqFeQNTDhfOFr_zitXVNdIIIR8At_ECR1Hmld9GC9osc
- Regularly check drains in and on your property and clear them if needed.
- Sign up for flood warnings: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>

KESWICK TOURISM ASSOCIATION
Council Representative – Councillor Chris Houghton

No report submitted

KESWICK YOUTH CENTRE
Council Representative – Councillor Adam Paxon

First full year in RC

Since we took on the 3 year lease for the Rawnsley Centre, we've been able to provide our 180 young members a place they can call their own, which both the members and the volunteers really value. The new Youth Club Centre has been brilliant.

We've been running Year 6 and Year 7/8 sessions on a Tuesday evening, Year 9+ on a Thursday and we ran a Summer Programme last Summer, to be repeated again this coming Summer.

Arts & crafts, games, dancing, pool, table tennis, football tables are combined with regular food preparation together or making items for sale at the Victorian Fayre or other events.

The sessions are generally very well attended, and regularly need to be capped to make sure we fit into the capacity of the volunteers available.

The new space has also offered us the chance to support Keswick Scouts during their extended period of being without a venue these past 6-8 months.

A number of additional activities from last year we haven't been able to repeat yet due to a shortage of volunteer time available – Monday evening canoe club and Wednesday evening Music group. We're working hard to expand our group of volunteers, which is proving to be an ongoing challenge we seem to share with other (youth) organisations in Keswick.

Survey results

Our annual member survey for the Junior Club indicated again how much the young members get out of their weekly sessions – the overwhelming majority indicates to be very happy to have the Youth Club to go to every week and the attendance figures back up the absolute need for this service for the youth of Keswick.

From the surveys, we have a long list of other activities the members would like us to offer during the week to enrich their lives – we do our best to cater for as many members as we can, with as varied a service as we can afford. It is clear however that demand outstrips supply ability right now!

Challenges

We're currently working on finding ways to expand our services as well as our sessions per week.

Our main challenges to make this happen are finding enough volunteers and trustees, as well fundraising.

Our fundraising efforts combine attendance at events like the Victorian Fayre, Keswick Mountain Festival and smaller events, collection tins, Just Giving page, social media, our website, local organisations like Keswick Town Council, Rotary, Lions, etc as well as trying to access larger funding streams for specific projects.

One of those projects is the building of our Car Park at the Old Mill site – we're hoping to put a spade in the ground later this year to make this happen, in order to generate ongoing funds to cover our annual costs.

Another project is to expand our paid youth worker hours from 10 hours currently, to 30 hours as soon as feasible. This will provide much-needed expertise and guaranteed hours of support across the weekly sessions and the ability to expand our activities on offer, including potentially additional evenings if we can also find the additional volunteers to join in.

The Year Ahead

We are putting in place a new communications plan for the rest of this year, to start attracting additional supporters – volunteers, trustees and funders.

In addition, we're appealing again to our long term supporting organisations to help us continue and expand our invaluable youth working services to a wider group of young people than we can currently manage, to give the youth of Keswick and surrounding areas what they need most: somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to.

Please just let me know if you have any questions or ideas or would like to brainstorm together on how we can expand our services to the Keswick community.

Many thanks,

Jorrit Jorritsma
KYCS Chair

KESWICK CONVENTION TOWN LIAISON GROUP
Council Representative - Councillor Rob Nelson

No report submitted

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
Ward Representative – Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours

No report submitted

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES
Vivien Little – Town Clerk

This year was all change for the Town Council, as our four-yearly election cycle came around once again, with a number of veteran Town Councillors choosing to stand down at the elections. We now have seven new Councillors, with a breadth of differing expertise, which has changed the direction of the Council.

Meetings continue to attract public attendance, with residents again raising a number of issues for the Council's consideration. Regular updates from Cumberland Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours ensured good communication from the upper tier authorities. It has been a challenging time with Allerdale Borough Council and Cumberland Council ceasing to exist, and some difficulties in finding out who is the best person to deal with the issues which are regularly reported to us, but issues reported on the Cumberland website continue to be acted upon.

Keswick Town Council makes most of its decisions at the monthly meeting; there are only two standing committees which cover Events and Staffing. However, there are a number of Working Groups which do a lot of work in the background, bringing their work forward at the full Council meetings.

The Events Committee meets regularly and 'masterminds' the annual Keswick Festival in Fitz Park in June, and the Christmas Lights switch on in November. We were able to put on a successful Midsummer Festival, with Pop and Proms in the Park on Saturday, and Scruffs on Sunday. Both were extremely well attending, and with the addition of Bee Unique, and their equipment made this a far more family friendly event. The Christmas Lights switch on was an extremely successful event, and we received a number of compliments which were very appreciated. The lights themselves were from a new contractor, and they will be in place through until Christmas 2026. Free parking in Central Car Park was kindly provided by Cumberland Council. A core of committed Councillors supported by representatives from a number of organisations and businesses in the town work hard to put on these regular events, together with other ad hoc events which may arise.

We have just agreed to work with an Events Coordinator, whom you might know – Kat Hale, formerly from Kat's Kitchen. She will be working closely with the Events Committee to develop the Events we put on, and hopefully put on more events moving forward.

The Staffing Committee continues to meet regularly, looking after the welfare of all the staff in the main office as well as the parks staff.

Planning continues to be a major part of the Council's remit – as a 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. As the Mayor stated in his report, the Town Council has been objecting to guest houses being turned into large holiday lets without any in house management, and we have spent time gathering evidence from local residents who have been affected by similar conversions, and continue to do so moving forward after the Lake District National Park Authority refused an application due to the evidence we provided. If you are affected by anti-social behaviour, please report it to the Town Council office.

There are also Working Groups sets up for a number of topics. The Environmental Working Group wound up, as it was agreed that the work it was doing should be undertaken by full Council, instead of just a small group of Councillors. We have started to put Councillors and Staff through Carbon Literacy training, which we hope will help us develop our Climate Change Action Plan further. I made a presentation to Town and Parish Councillors, as well as other guests regarding what Town and Parish Councils can do in respect of Climate Change, which went down well and has since been reported in the Keswick Reminder.

The Visitor Management Working Group now intends to work more closely with external commercial event providers, who have been seen to use Keswick, with not necessarily any visible benefit to the people of Keswick. It has been heartening to see that some of them are willing to work with groups across Keswick. It is not always easy to find out which events are using Keswick, however we have been able to now receive information about events from Cumberland's Events Advisory Group, which is making it easier to get a list of events.

We have created a Housing Working Group, which was formed in response to the issue of lack of affordable housing in Keswick, in order to be able to lobby authorities such as Cumberland Council and the Lake District National Park Authority and Central Government, to act as the main working group for all housing relating matters, and to monitor local occupancy breaches. The Housing Group is especially keen to find out about local residents experience with housing in Keswick, and what residents would like to see moving forward.

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

The Town Council is the sole trustee of Keswick Parks with all Councillors meeting in their 'trustee' role every two months. Town Council staff also support Keswick Parks with Fitz Park and Hope Park having their own separate budgets. Visitor numbers to

Keswick remain high, meaning the parks continue to be extremely busy, but staff keep the parks looking at their best through challenging circumstances.