



ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25

Welcome to the Town Council's Annual Report for 2024/25

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 2025**

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
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The offices are normally open as follows: -

Monday to Thursday
9.30am –1.00pm

Cllrs	Email address:	
Cllr Louise Dunn	louise.dunn@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Natalie Evans	natalie.evans@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Steve Harwood	steve.harwood@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Chris Houghton	chris.houghton@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
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Cllr Denstone Kemp	denstone.kemp@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
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Cllr Jean Murray	jean.murray@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Rob Nelson	rob.nelson@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Claire Peat	claire.peat@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Richard Scott	richard.scott@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk	
Cllr Lorraine Taylor	lorraine.taylor@keswicktowncouncil.gov.uk >	

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, Support Officer

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 2024-25

Councillor Louise Dunn– Town Mayor

It's been another busy year at the Town Council, with Councillors and staff working diligently to represent the needs of residents. The 'new' councillors of the 2023 election are now well established and contributing enormously, and over the last year, we have continued to diversify the representation on the Town Council, encouraging more people of working age, and those who are Keswick-born, to stand as Town Councillors. These efforts have paid off with the appointments this year of Cllrs. Claire Peat, Natalie Evans and Richard Scott. We have also continued in our efforts to engage more fully and meaningfully with the local community, with a regular Mayor's column in *The Keswick Reminder*, councillor meet-up sessions and encouraging people to attend the council meetings. The Town Council also has a presence on social media and are taking the time to listen, explain actions made by the council, and respond to enquiries. Plus, we are always bumping into people in town who ask us questions or make constructive suggestions – please continue to do this. One thing we haven't managed to get off the ground yet is the appointment of youth representatives to the Council so we will try and find a way to make that happen in the next 12 months. It is important that all the people of the town feel that the Council represents them.

There has been lots going on in the town in the last 12 months. There have been the usual array of sporting events including the Mountain Festival, the Lakesman, and the 10 in 10 among others. It was a big year for the Theatre by the Lake team who were celebrating the building's 25th birthday. There were many events such as Scruffs, Party in the Park and the wonderful Christmas lights switch-on, at which Duncan and Yvonne Booth were granted the honour of the Freedom of the Keswick in recognition of their dedication to fundraising to find a cure for multiple sclerosis.

This year we held a couple of planning days - to decide what the priorities were for the Town Council. This was necessary because there are so many requests made of us, and the needs of the community are wide ranging. It also helps to focus the resource of the small staff team and the councillors (all of whom are unpaid volunteers) on what's possible and what will make the biggest impact. Many of the requests made of us are within the remit of Cumberland Council and the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) or the police and we have been signposting people to the right persons within these bodies when they have a request, as well as contacting them directly ourselves on issues that are clearly impacting residents. The regular subjects won't surprise you: they include housing, parking, dog mess, public toilets, litter, anti-social behaviour and bins. We spend a lot of time advocating on behalf of the town with the decision makers with varying degrees of success.

A major preoccupation for the Town Council remains securing a swimming pool for Keswick. We have been working hard to show the decision-makers at Cumberland Council that not only is it necessary for residents, but also for the visitor economy. We have been ably supported by Keswick Cumberland Cllr Sally Lansbury and our MP Markus Campbell-Savours. It's a difficult financial environment for a major investment in leisure facilities, but building the economic case is the next step. I sincerely hope that we will be able to report a decision to rebuild or reopen the pool in the coming year.

One area that takes up a lot of time and resource are the free events we put on as a council – such as the Christmas lights switch on and Party in the Park. Cllr. Rob Nelson has brought a great deal of energy and ideas to the events committee and has instigated new events - for May Day at Townsfield and a revival of the Keswick Sports. Please come along to support and join in, even better bring a bin bag and help with the clear up (or take your litter home with you).

The town continues to juggle the upsides and downsides of tourism. Keswick Town Council and Cumberland Council are continually being asked to provide additional infrastructure such as housing for workers, toilets, extra litter collections and deal with issues caused by holiday lets. During this year, The Friends of the Lake District (FOLD) commissioned an academic report entitled 'Who pays for the Lake District?' The report clearly laid out the financial burden placed on local communities (like ours) by tourism and called for some sort of visitor levy which would be retained and spent to improve the infrastructure – to the benefit of the community and the visitors. Keswick Town Council is supportive of this. The response to the FOLD report has been very positive and the LDNPA's stance on this has shifted and it is now being considered seriously. It may take time, but it's headed in the right direction.

During the year, as always, Keswick's voluntary organisations and churches continue to provide an incredible network of support and activities that enrich our community. The food share has provided supplies to those most in need, the Youth Centre has gone from strength to strength and the Rugby Club's 'Big Build' fundraiser has been a huge success. In Threlkeld, the village hall coffee shop has been extended and renovated. The Lions and the Rotary are always there supporting events and activities of others as well as running their own fundraisers for the community. The Keswick in Bloom team keep the town's flower beds a riot of colour. The Theatre by the Lake, Keswick Choral society and KAOS the amateur operatic society bring joy and music to so many. Keswick Community Housing Trust are working diligently to bring more affordable housing to the town. There are many, many more. The efforts of volunteers in our community make such a difference to everyone. Their achievements take a lot of organisation and hard work and it's important that we all recognise their impact and take time to say well done and thank you.

Hand in hand with the charities and voluntary groups are the many businesses in the town that offer community events, charities and groups their financial support, facilities and services. There are too many to list, but as a Trustee for the Calvert Trust, I am so grateful for the help we have been given this year by many local businesses who have provided fundraising events and prizes for raffles, including Booths whose employees voted to make the Calvert Trust as their Charity of the year.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the councillors for their hard work and pay tribute to our team in the office and in the parks who do a brilliant job. This year it has been my honour to be the Chair of the Town Council and your Mayor this year. Thank you for your support and feedback. It's been an honour. Thank you.

Councillor Louise Dunn, Mayor of Keswick

PARKS TRUST CHAIR'S REPORT 2024-25

Councillor Jean Murray

It's been a very busy year for the Parks, with a number of planned developments either completed or nearing completion, and some exciting initiatives on the way. In **Upper Fitz Park** the new building at the rear of Café HNW has been completed. We now have weatherproof and secure storage for all of the Parks machinery and tools, and modern facilities for our hard working Parks staff, including a Drying Room for their wet weather gear, proper toilet facilities, and a fully equipped kitchen. The now defunct and dilapidated storage containers are currently in the process of being removed from the site.

Café HNW has recently reopened following a major refurbishment and is a valuable community resource and relaxation space for residents, visitors and community groups. A new Woodland Stage has been built by Parks Staff, which will ensure that the very popular music and entertainment sessions can continue and develop. A beautiful new patio area has been installed by our talented Parks staff at the side of the Café as part of the refurbishment, which has multiple uses, including use as a picnic area. The area has been landscaped and hedges and an Acer tree have been planted to complement the area.

The tennis courts, bowling green and putting green will soon be in action for the summer.

Lower Fitz continues to be a very busy area with local Cricket and Football Sports Clubs, and the increasingly popular Park Run on Saturday mornings, and Junior Park Run on Sunday mornings. It is often a hive of activity, very popular with both residents and visitors, for dog walking, children's games, picnics, exercise, and rest and relaxation.

The children's play area is immensely popular, but has been showing its age, and needing a lot of expensive maintenance for some time, and several pieces of equipment are becoming no longer viable.

This year, Keswick Town Council has launched a fund raising campaign to raise £400,000 for a new Adventure Playground. This is an opportunity to create a state of the art play area, with exciting opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to play, learn and enjoy an adventure. This venture is in its very early stages, but we are keen to progress this and make it a reality as soon as we can raise the necessary funds. We will be communicating with and consulting with children, parents, and all users to ensure that their input is fully integrated into the plans, as this project develops.

The Party in the Park and the ever popular Scruffs Dog Show will also take place here on 28th and 29th June respectively.

Elizabeth's Wood, by Hospital Field has continued to develop and become more established and is used regularly by local schools as part of their outdoor education programmes, as well as being an ideal space for quiet reflection and relaxation. Here, with our partners, including Sustainable Keswick and the Woodland Trust, we have planted more than 300 trees, as well as encouraging wildflower and wildlife areas to develop naturally. There are sustainable pathways, and wooden benches to encourage visitors to this area to pause and enjoy the natural surroundings.

Hope Park continues to be the Jewel in the Crown for floral displays and imaginative planting and has again been awarded a Gold Award by Cumbria in Bloom. Thanks must go to our hard working Parks staff for the amazing work they do to keep up such high standards in this lovely place.

Max's statue continues to attract visitors and their canine friends from far and wide, and has provided a great photo opportunity for residents and visitors alike. Café Hope now has an extended and fully paved outside seating area, with colourful benches, and lots of space to enjoy the views with refreshments. The fencing around the mini boating area is being replaced currently, and this will be followed by repairs and upgrading to the pathway here.

Townsfeld is well used and very popular with local residents. New gates and fencing have been installed together with benches for users. It is used by local people predominantly and provides a social space, a dog walking area, a green space for children to play and access to the river for warmer days.

The Traditional Tup Fair takes place here, and Townsfeld is also the venue for the first ever Keswick Games, on Sunday August 17th, which is primarily aimed at residents and their families and offers some exciting competitions and events for children and adults. The Town Council Facebook will carry details of everything that is happening, nearer the time.

Carbon Neutral Policy

The Trust has a policy of working towards a Carbon Neutral position within the Parks, and we have considered all developments carefully with this in mind. When machinery has to be replaced, we are replacing petrol or diesel driven machines with electric machinery, where 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 the environmental impact of all of the work that is undertaken within the Parks, as a matter of priority.

There are ongoing issues across all of the Parks, including the cost of disposing of litter and dog waste, removal of which is costed by weight, and which increases year on year. We need to develop innovative ways to encourage all Parks users to take their litter away with them.

Unfortunately, the Trust also have to bear the impact of, and the cost of vandalism in our Parks, which is notably more frequent during school holidays, and which includes damage to signs and other installations, and destruction and damage to trees and planting. Much of this appears to take place under cover of darkness, or in the very early morning hours. Local PCSOs have initiated regular patrols, which can act as a deterrent, but they can't be there all the time, and opportunists are aware of this. As Chair of the Trust, I am happy to be contacted by local residents about any concerns or compliments they may have about the work of the Trust, and any matters relating to any of our Parks. My contact details are on the Town Council website, as are all the Councillors and Trustees.

Particular thanks must go to Parks Manager Christine Fawcett, and all of the staff, for their dedication, hard work and enthusiasm in maintaining and developing all three Parks, often in very challenging conditions.

In conclusion, I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to all the Trustees, and in particular to Councillor Chris Houghton, Deputy Chair, and Vivien, Catherine and Ania, for their invaluable support and assistance throughout the year.

Councillor Jean Murray
Chair
Keswick Parks Charitable Trust

FINANCIAL REPORT

Catherine Parker – Responsible Finance Officer

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

Expenditure	£
General Admin (Including Salaries)	90,659.00
Mayors Allowance	2,000.00
Grants Awarded	19,000.00
Christmas Lights	33,274.00
War Memorial	1,495.00
Open Spaces	1,000.00
Fitz Park	203,297.00
Floral Displays	600.00
Town Events inc Scruffs	8,570.00
Events Coordinator	1,805.00
Allotments	292.00
Advertising	226.00
Audit Fee/Accounts Preparation	2,015.00
Contingency Sum	2,192.00
Annual Parish Meeting	104.00
CCTV Annual Maintenance - PCC	1,670.00
Elections 2023	647.00
Grasscutting - Churchyards	4,000.00
KCERP – General Fund	6,500.00
KCHT – 2024, 25 & 26	3,000.00
Card Reader	139.00
Total	382,485.00

Income	£
Precept	349,627.00
Grant to Fitz Park (ABC)	20,000.00
Walker Park – Rent	14,130.00
Allotment Income	961.00
Keswick Events Contributions	2,597.00
Christmas Lights Contributions	2,150.00
Bank, CCLA & Unity Investment Interest	6,287.00
Supplier Refund	20.00
Total	395,772.00

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 2024/25:

Citizens Advice Allerdale	£500.00
Keswick Area Food Share	£1,000.00
Keswick Rugby Football Club	£5,000.00
1st Keswick Scouts Group	£2,500.00
Keswick Senior Citizens Club (The Drop In)	£1,000.00
Keswick Youth Centre Services	£5,776.50
Keswick & District Fair Trade	£150.00
St Herbert's CE Primary & Nursery – Eco Warriors	£300.00
Theatre by the Lake	£2,000.00
Twos Company Keswick	£750.00
Poppy Wreath	£24.49
Total:	£19000.99

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

The Battersby Hall is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation administered entirely by the Trustees. The current Trustees are appointed representatives of the Church, Parish Council and Local Organisations who are:

Rev. Charles Hope - Vicar of St. John's Church acting as Chair.
George Page on behalf of St. John's PCC acting as Secretary.
Brenda Mumford on behalf of St. John's PCC.
John Hayes on behalf of Keswick Rotary acting as Treasurer.
Nigel Hale on behalf of Keswick Lions.
Steve Harwood on behalf of Keswick Town Council.

The principle asset of the Battersby Hall Trust is the ownership of the most prominent feature in the town, The Moot Hall. This was purchased in 2018 following the sale of the original Battersby Hall Library buildings. The Trust also derives an income from investments over the years and rental income from the Moot Hall, which is currently leased to the Lake District National Park Authority. This runs until 31 March 2026 and negotiations are ongoing for a renewal of the lease.

The principle objective 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. Over the past year the Trust has made local education grants totalling £25,867 to:

- 8 School leavers towards their travel and other costs while undertaking courses in Cumbrian colleges and training facilities.
- Education support grants to 101 local families towards their general education costs, school uniforms etc.
- Support grants to each of the five local primary schools - Braithwaite, Bassenthwaite, Threlkeld, Borrowdale and St. Herbert's.
- Grants have also been made to the Keswick Lecture Society and the Keswick Senior Citizens Club.

Following completion of an extensive programme of repairs and restoration works there remained the outstanding issue of the storm damaged weathervane sustained in 2022. This was the subject of a protracted insurance claim but the work was completed in 2024. There is an ongoing issue with the timekeeping of the clock which is awaiting specialist attention.

KESWICK IN BLOOM

Council Representative – Councillor Benita Laphorn

Keswick in Bloom has continued to provide floral displays in the town centre, at road entrances to Keswick and along the main route to the lake. This year we also tackled two major projects; refurbishment of the KESWICK bed and major pruning of the sizeable beds at the bottom of Lakes Road. We have achieved these by working closely with Keswick Parks team.

KESWICK bed

This iconic bed has suffered from Box Blight. The decision was made to refurbish the bed and to this end we applied to the council for grant funding. Work has begun, with the removal of the KESWICK box lettering. We will be raising the barrier at the front of the bed and replenishing the soil before planting with begonias. For 2025 only, the KESWICK letters will be planted using white begonias, with more permanent hedging being planted in the Autumn. We have kept the community notified of the planned work with articles in the Reminder and entries on Facebook.

Lakes Road / Underpass beds

There are 4 large beds either side of the underpass that were planted over 12 years ago. The trees and shrubs had grown quite large, a few had died off or been felled by the storms this year. The Keswick Parks team did the heavy pruning with help from KiB volunteers. This area gets many compliments from both visitors and residents.

Entrances to Keswick

KiB is responsible for the Hydrangea beds at the junction of the Crosthwaite Road and Vicarage Hill. Pruning of these shrubs was done but access was very difficult due to long grass and damage caused by vehicles. We have successfully received a grant from Keswick Town Council to have this grass cut throughout the growing season to improve the overall attractiveness of this entrance to Keswick.

Town Centre

KiB is responsible for 13 planters, 10 mangers and 2 raised beds in the town centre.

Finances

We applied for Council funding for 2025-26 due to the scale of the planned work. Our close working with the Keswick Parks team has enabled us to keep costs down and we have been fortunate to receive some donations.

Volunteers

We currently have 10 active members. We successfully recruited 2 new members this year but more recruitment will be needed in 2025 as some long-standing volunteers will be stepping down.

KESWICK COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP
Council Representative – Councillor Jean Murray

Achievements:

- Additional grant funding approved by Cumbria Community Foundation – covers equipment to keep the control room running in case of a power outage coinciding with a flooding emergency, or allows some generator capacity in the town in case of a prolonged power outage before the utility companies can get to us. The challenge will be storage of the generator equipment.
- Lengthsperson: We successfully contracted a lengthsperson to look after the culverts and surface water drainage systems within the town. He and his team have done a great job, mapping out how the culverts flow through the town, clearing them of weeds and gravel to ensure they are free-flowing, and looking at ways to optimise the job. Throughout the autumn/winter months, we have devised a 3-weekly schedule so that all problem areas are regularly looked at. We're hoping to secure further funding from the Cumbria Community Foundation to continue with this programme, and liaise more closely with Cumberland Highways to ensure our roles are complementary.
- Mini exercise held to test the current plan 21st September 2024. Low volunteer availability, but enough to enable a successful test of vital processes. Attendance from Ulverston's ERG to share best practice/feedback. K FAG attended and shared knowledge. Some processes need minor tweaks to improve them for example
 - we have extra kit, so better sign out sheets, and a volunteer to deal purely with equipment
 - some of the briefing should be incorporated into training/a handbook rather than given on the day, so materials need to be updated & distributed
 - K FAG provided a better understanding of where the water comes from and in what order to aid planning/response when water is rising.
- Allerdale used to provide Floodsax. They (as Cumberland) will no longer be doing this, but divided out their existing stores to various emergency groups in the area, so we have a healthy stock of portable floodsax.
- Attended "Operation Watershed" – a Cumbria-wide exercise run by the Resilience Forum in conjunction with the emergency services to simulate a county-wide flooding scenario. It was a great opportunity to meet some of the other people that would be involved in a real-life flood scenario, and provide feedback on how the exercise was managed.

Ongoing work/challenges:

- Working on handbooks/mini guides for volunteers and lead volunteers so they don't have to search through a cumbersome plan to find the relevant information.
- Looking at future grant funding
- Challenges with the current banking arrangements – grant funding needs to be used, but there's no way to purchase with the current bank other than cheque. Agreed to transfer all of the reserved grant funds to a pre-paid card to allow those purchases

to be made, and for the card to be held in the Town Clerk's safe as an additional control.

- Working more closely with the Flood Action Group, particularly regarding Thirlmere's management/flood release regime. Attended a number of meetings with the EA and UU to look at other options that are more responsive than the current regime of slow releases when the reservoir reaches monthly trigger points.
- Cockermouth and Kendal both have new response group coordinators, so sharing knowledge with them.

KESWICK AND DISTRICT FAIR TRADE COMMITTEE **Council Representative – Claire Houghton**

The Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign held their Annual General Meeting on Thursday June 20th. Twelve members of the campaign attended. Kelvin Rushworth was welcomed on to the Committee, and was then proposed and elected as the Chair. Bernadette Fagan has retired as Chair: she was thanked for her very creative contributions to the work of the campaign over many years. Tom Rennie and Jo Alberti were again elected, respectively, as Treasurer and Secretary.

One of the highlights of the past year have been the erection of an elegant slate sign, made by Coniston Stonecraft, on the Fairtrade flowerbed, created by Keswick in Bloom, just before the bridge above the road leading to the lake.

Bernadette designed and put into effect a most engaging gingerbread competition, sponsored by Lakes and Dales co-op, for Millfield school.

Fairtrade Fortnight took place, unusually, in September of this year; from the 9th to the 22nd of that month. An exhibition of the work of Fairtrade was displayed in the library. Joe Human gave a powerful talk on the Coffee Crisis. Jo Alberti spoke to the Rotary Club at their lunchtime meeting. A lively Fairtrade service was held in Southey Street Methodist Church.

In December the campaign had a presence on the Oxfam table at the Threlkeld Craft Fair and we shared the stall at the Victorian Fayre with the Caldbeck Fair World Shop.

Bernadette Fagan has kindly again created a tree for the Southey Street Methodist Church Christmas tree display.

The campaign has a presence on social media and we maintain a website giving coverage of our activities. The Reminder also prints articles we send them with reports on our activities.

Our intention is always to remind people of how vitally important it is to the farmers and producers in the developing world that we buy Fairtrade. Throughout the year we have been emphasising the relevance of the climate crisis is to those farmers. They are facing the worst of the crisis although they have contributed the least to it. Environmental protection has always been part of the practice of Fairtrade farmers and in recent times this is enhanced help given in planting trees, using crop rotation, organic farming, and natural pest control to reduce reliance on synthetic inputs and enhance biodiversity. The goal is to build resilient and regenerative food systems.

We value the presence of Councillor Claire Houghton at our committee meetings.

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

The KFAG team continue their incredible work providing real-time updates this winter - updating the community on all storms and potential flood events. Please sign up to their Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/549580611880403>
to access information or look at their web site.
<https://keswickfloodactiongroup.co.uk>

In Keswick:

- **Insurance against flood:** Lynne Jones is collecting evidence of anyone having trouble reinsuring their homes despite qualifying for FloodRe OR anyone who has difficulty in the selling/buying process because of the property's flood risk. Please contact her via Facebook if you can help.
- **Flood Simulation Exercise in Sept 2024:** On a Saturday in September, the Keswick Community Emergency Response Group (KCERP) held a half-day practice for a flood response. The council chamber was speedily turned into "Flood HQ" by the group volunteer leaders according to a well-practiced floor plan with a "Radio Room" to the side (which was, in fact, just one of the team in a cupboard with the radio control gear perched on a small picnic table - but don't knock it because it works). Large maps of the town were put up and radios prepared, then groups of volunteers were paged in, kitted out with high vis jackets. and tasked to go out and check the sandbag stores around town. Some local people also offered the teams experience in helping with erecting property level protection and to practice "door knocking". It was definitely time to review and revise the emergency plan/procedures and streamline the documentation. Living amongst the Lake District fells we have a very short catchment. Mountain rivers rapidly react and the river gauge on the town's main bridge can be recording the river's rise as an almost vertical line which, even with improved flood defences since 2012, rather concentrates the mind. It was important to prepare with practical exercises,

spending time together, getting to know our strengths and abilities and picking up the ways we can improve our response. We also know how lucky we are to live in a small community where discounts from local shops helped with the purchase of the kit volunteers needed; and for having the full support of our town council, both in terms of providing permanent office space and the use of the council chambers but also for funding Claire, our terrific Emergency Response Coordinator. More than anything else it was so reassuring to meet up with so many lovely people from organisations like Lions, Churches Together, Round Table, who are prepared to come together and help in a crisis.

- **Hawthornes Leak saga continues:** After many months of reporting the leak on Penrith Road (and thanks to Cllr Sally Lansbury) investigations into the cause of the leak on Penrith Road by Cumberland Council and United Utilities resulted in CC reporting it to United Utilities as a Section 81 defect. Section 81 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 sets out the duty of a utility company to maintain their apparatus. This includes the notification which can be given to a utility company if “emergency works” are required. The hole has been sealed up but water is still coming out of the road.
- **Lengthsman appointed:** Ben Metcalfe appointed and has started work clearing culverts and watercourses in the town. Contact via Cllr Claire Peat, KCERP.
- **Please report blocked grids to Cumberland Council:** Residents are asked to report any blocked drains and grids to Cumberland Council via their online reporting system. The more reports made the more likely they are to be unblocked. It takes a few minutes, send a picture and location reference (what 3 words or address/ postcode).

Meanwhile in Westminster:

- **Environment Agency have published their Rural flood resilience partnership: 2024 to 2026 work plan.** A work plan developed in partnership to support the objectives of the FCERM Strategy Roadmap and help vulnerable rural communities when faced with flooding.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-flood-resilience-partnership-2024-to-2026-work-plan>
- **A new inquiry has been launched by the Environmental Audit Committee into flooding. The inquiry will look at infrastructure, climate change impacts and coastal erosion. Have your say here. DEADLINE 13th January.**
https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3512/?fbclid=IwY2xjawHoz3JleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHU0-rr-ajokqnX7Arm24v-_FnhyJua3k-OnicyXSYRnM0wQ0DVIHRQMw8g_aem__hThuJmMeaAkbT3ZGylCVQ
- **Local MP Markus Campbell-Savours asked. Question in the House of Commons, raising the issue of use of reservoirs to reduce peak flow in storms:** ‘In 2019, the Keswick Flood Action Group set out how Thirlmere

reservoir could be managed to greatly reduce the impact of major flooding, like that seen in the town during Storm Desmond. Will the Leader of the House make time to debate how water companies' infrastructure could be better used to prevent flooding in Penrith and Solway, and many other constituencies?' K FAG Is reaching out to other communities where reservoir management reduces their flood risk in the hope that joining forces will bring about action.

- **Announcement November 2024: Reforms to flood funding and investment to protect farming communities** £50 million investment into internal drainage boards and plans to consult on new strategic vision for floods investment. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reforms-to-flood-funding-and-investment-to-protect-farming-communities?fbclid=IwY2xjawHoyhVleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHQJzH_fueJrnxiLoNXR1P0ukcEECSq8e5f3devLMKg0bxTbeUxd7R4nrBQ_aem_ugTyjMisNmQR_BeMSE0v8Q
- **Announcement August 2024: UK to receive earlier flood and drought warnings using high-tech sensors and real time monitoring.** Researchers across the UK to use latest tech and major data bank to provide better flood and drought warnings. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-receive-earlier-flood-and-drought-warnings-using-high-tech-sensors-and-real-time-monitoring?fbclid=IwY2xjawHoy8BleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHX6c4VTRxinvRC45LJraGtOYsPi5MktaA7FUqzASj7fyZxGmOm4bBdGqkA_aem_BUpJBafLkUL75yS7-NJrnw

KESWICK TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Council Representative – Councillor Chris Houghton

No report submitted

KESWICK YOUTH CENTRE

**Council Representative – Councillor Lorraine Taylor
Councillor Natalie Evans**

Keswick Youth Centre is thriving, with over 180 young members. They meet at the Rawnsley Centre, holding 3 sessions a week for 3 different age groups. Tuesday has 2 sessions, firstly for Yr 6 age group then followed by Yr 7/8, with a Yr 9+ session on Thursday. A range of activities are provided and a safe place for young people in Keswick to meet up and find support if needed. The Rawnsley Centre provides a great space for a variety of uses. Its large main room has comfortable seating areas, craft areas and a games table, a smaller quieter room serves snacks and drinks with tables for quieter conversations.

A new initiative called Friends of Keswick Youth Centre has just been launched in March, to widen the pool of volunteer hours across all ages. In becoming a friend you can support members by donating time, as much or as little as you can manage.

Heather and Mark Stainton have recently retired after 25 years of volunteering, and will be much missed for all their work in keeping the the youth club going through the many changes over the years.

It costs £30,000 a year to run the Youth club, nearly 50% of that amount is for rent of the Rawnsley Centre. Funding comes from a variety of sources, donations from local community groups and grant application made by Trustees to larger funding bodies, this is a constant pressure for the Youth Club as they are aware that they need to look for future funding when current streams come to an end.

The Youth Club owns the land where the original Old Mill youth club building stood, and is soon to open as the Old Mill Carpark. This will provide sustainable funding for Keswick Youth Club.

With so many Youth Clubs closing in the UK, Keswick is fortunate that there are a group of people in the town committed to providing a safe place for our young people to meet up, and their hard work is to be commended.

THRELKELD HOUSING ASSOCIATION
Council Representative – Councillor Denstone Kemp

No report submitted

SUSTAINABLE KESWICK
Council Representative – Councillor Lorraine Taylor
Councillor Natalie Evans

Following the Annual Town Meeting in May 2024, Sustainable Keswick became an outside body to Keswick Town Council, with Lorraine Taylor as council representative and Natalie Evans joining as representative in December 2024. Established in 2007, the projects and campaigns work towards three main goals: reduce carbon emissions, improve biodiversity and reduce waste.

Sustainable Keswick have four biodiversity sites within Keswick: Elizabeth Wood in Fitz Park, Springs Road flood storage basin, land at Lakeland Park and on Borrowdale Road. These areas are managed, planted and sown by SusKes volunteers. As well as 'balsam bashing' of the invasive species and planned 'bio blitz' days throughout the year. SusKes hope to be successful in a bid for funding for some signage, which will be placed in Elizabeth Wood. In addition to this, SusKes have participated in a citizen science project with West Cumbria Rivers Trust to monitor water quality in Derwentwater.

SusKes run a monthly Climate Café, covering a range of topics, including IPCC reports; Reflections on Climate, 2022; Gowbarrow Hall Farm; Climate Change and Population Growth; Climate Change and Migration; Changes in the Arctic 2022; Hope; Famines. A column, 'Notes from a warming world', contributed to by

Sustainable Keswick, can be found fortnightly in the Keswick Reminder. A monthly Green Screen is hosted at the Alhambra cinema, next showing 'Escape from Extinction: Rewilding' on Tuesday 22nd April.

Following a community solar and car share feasibility study, an electric vehicle community car share club has been set up, with the car based at Keswick Quaker Meeting House, aiming to establish, a viable, environmentally sustainable, member-led car club for the benefit of the residents of Keswick. In December 2024, SusKes were successful in securing funding from Cumbria Community Foundation through Cumberland Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to enable the purchase of the car club vehicle following a successful project pilot phase. SusKes volunteers have carried out 56 thermal imaging surveys for households and village halls across Keswick, Portinscale, Braithwaite, Thornthwaite and Rosthwaite. These surveys detect temperature variations, identifying issues such as heat loss, air leaks and insulation problems in buildings and equipment.

Sustainable Keswick has seen success this year, including, although not limited to, the eco car share, campaign against the West Cumbria Coal Mine, ongoing well attended events, regular work with St. Herbert's Primary School's EcoWarriors and lobbying for reduction in pesticides and herbicides used to manage public green spaces. Watch this space for involvement in Keswick Town Council events and support of Keswick School with the 'Brilliant Cumbria' initiative during Great Big Green Week, w/c 7th June 2025.

KESWICK CONVENTION TOWN LIAISON GROUP
Council Representative - Councillor Rob Nelson

No report submitted

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
Ward Representative – Councillor Sally Lansbury

No report submitted

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES
Vivien Little – Town Clerk

This year we saw a number of changes in Councillors, with three resignations throughout the year bringing in three new Councillors. It is good to see a number of people willing to step forward and stand for Council, giving back to the community and bringing a positivity to the Council. This year both the Councillors and staff have taken part in strategy days, seeking what priorities the Council wants to work towards, as well as being able to plan out what we need from a budgetary perspective.

Meetings continue to attract public attendance, with residents again raising a number of issues for the Council's consideration. Following the resignation of Markus Campbell-Savours from Cumberland Council in order to stand as the MP of the new Penrith and the Solway constituency, and with the subsequent by-election, Sally Lansbury became the new Cumberland Councillor for Keswick. She has created a good working relationship with the Town Council, inviting the Mayor and other Councillors as well as myself to take part in discussions surrounding issues such as the swimming pool and the proposals regarding the TROs in the Back Streets. We look forward to continuing this relationship.

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 have continued to organise many events in Keswick, and made a change recently in taking on Yvonne Booth as Events Coordinator. Her experience in organising her own events made her a great addition to the team, and she has taken over organising and expanding the events seamlessly. The Events Committee are looking at putting on two more events this year, a MayDay event for locals to be held on Townsfield on Monday 5th May 2025, and resurrecting the Keswick Games in collaboration with the Cricket Club and Athletics Club, to be held in August in Fitz Park.

We were able to put on our usual successful Midsummer Festival, with rebranded 'Party in the Park' on Saturday and Scruffs on Sunday. These were both extremely well attended, and have worked to become family friendly events with the addition of the charity Bee Unique, and their equipment. We are glad to work with such a vital charity, who work closely with children with autism. The Christmas Lights switch on this year was a special event, with Duncan and Yvonne Booth switching on the lights, as well as being awarded with the Freedom of Keswick at the same time. The night was as busy as it has ever been, helped by good weather, and free parking in Central Car Park was once again 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.

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. The biggest news on this front was that this year

The Visitor Management Working Group has begun 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.

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.