

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

AGENDA ITEM 5

WRITTEN NOTICE OF RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions have been submitted to the Town Clerk for consideration.

- 1. The Town Council will seek practical steps to address noise and anti-social behaviour due to large holiday lets with no on-site owner.**

This could be a 'good neighbour' voluntary code of practice co-ordinated and funded by the Letting agencies with offices in Keswick and the property owners. This system would set an expectation that owners and lettings agencies are fully accountable for the proactive management of anti-social behaviour of their holiday customers. It would also provide neighbours with the assurance of a central reporting system which would ensure swift resolution of incidents and ongoing monitoring to identify problem areas. These issues can be eliminated with careful management and this scheme may go some way to reassure local residents about the recent trend whereby B&Bs are changing use to holiday lets.

- 2. This Town Council resolves to support Keswick people in their objective to hold Allerdale Borough Council to account over the closure of the Keswick Leisure Pool.**

We will seek a 'shovel ready' plan for the new Unitary Authority in 2023 to establish excellent leisure facilities in the Town, including a swimming pool and an all-weather sports pitch. This investment would be for the benefit of the resident population, the many pool users from West Cumbria and the visitors and businesses in the wider tourism economy.

- 3. The Town Council will raise the profile over the coming 12 months of what is involved in being a councillor in order to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to stand as candidates for Keswick Town Council at the elections in May 2023.**

A number of councillors are planning to step down next year. For KTC to thrive and be connected with the community, it needs to encourage more candidates to stand from across a broader spectrum of the community in terms of age, gender and life experience. As a suggestion, to bring the role to life for people, how about inviting the new councillor, Lewis Forsyth, to do a monthly piece around his experiences in his first year, and also encourage features from existing councillors to cover what it means to them to serve on the council.

- 4. The Town Council to support the establishment of a Keswick Smarter Group.**

On BBC Radio Cumbria, there was a piece about Appleby Smarter. This group formed 7 years ago, and in coordination with their town council, tackle jobs around the town to keep it looking great.

There are areas of our town and the surrounding footpaths that could do with a bit of TLC. Keswickians are great at responding to rallying cries - look at the help provided to St Johns Church re their grave yard, litter picking activities, Himalayan Balsam bashing, to name just a few. Would KTC support action to set up a similar group for Keswick?

5. **KCHT calls upon the Town Council to lobby Government, both locally and nationally, to ensure the proposed third statutory purpose is introduced in law for National Parks. This will make the National Park Authorities accountable for the viability and vibrancy of the communities that live within them.**

KCHT supports the Town Council's response to the Government consultation on its proposed response to the Landscapes Review, and notes the close alignment with our own response (a summary of which is attached).

National Parks currently have two statutory purposes:

- a. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Lake District National Park; and
- b. To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

The National Parks have no statutory purpose to look after the local communities that live in them. It is disappointing that the Government is not intending to remedy this omission.

KCHT believes that everyone has the right to proper, secure affordable housing. For our local communities to remain vibrant places where people are able to live, work and raise families, it is vital that the third statutory purpose, as recommended in the review, is adopted as this would require the National Park to act in a manner that ***fosters the community and economic vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes.***

6. **KCHT calls upon the Town Council to lobby Government, both locally and nationally, to introduce 'elected membership to National Park Boards'**

KCHT notes that neither the Review, nor the Government's proposed response to it, seeks to change the current practice of appointing members to National Park Boards. We believe that this is a missed opportunity to address the democratic deficit of unelected representation. Every other authority in England is run by elected representatives, be they Parish, Town or County Councils or Parliament at Westminster, and they are accountable to the people they represent through the ballot box.

7. **KCHT calls upon the Town Council to act as guardians for sites identified in Keswick that have the potential to be developed to provide affordable housing for local people, and to acknowledge the importance they represent for providing affordable homes both now for the people of Keswick and also for their children who may wish to establish their own homes here in the future.**

There are only a limited number of sites identified in Keswick that have the potential to be developed to provide affordable housing for local people. KCHT believes that as and when such sites are developed, the rate of development must be aligned with current identified housing needs and if necessary be required to be phased rather than developed all in one go. This is to prevent the risk of supply exceeding demand, leading to properties going to people from outside the locality.

8. **KCHT calls upon the Town Council to lobby Allerdale Borough Council to ensure that their future housing needs assessment survey factors in all groups.**

The last Housing needs survey was published by Allerdale Borough Council in May 2016. KCHT is concerned that the official approach to understanding local housing needs is

primarily focused on families with children. As a result, the housing needs of groups such as young people and couples without children are not being factored in. Additionally the traditional approaches for gathering this information use mechanisms that do not engage with all groups.

9. **KCHT calls upon the Town Council to lobby the local authority and NPA to allocate budgets to support funding of enforcement action when made aware of breaches of Local Occupancy Restrictions.**

Over the past 12 months, KCHT and KTC have worked together to identify and bring to the attention of the relevant authorities cases where properties are being used in a manner that is incompatible with their Local Occupancy Restrictions. It has become clear that there is inadequate funding and resources available in these bodies to take appropriate action.

Living Landscapes - Affordable Housing and Vibrant Local Communities – supplemental paper (resolution 5)

1. KCHT believes that if our local communities are to remain vibrant places where people want to live, work and raise families, then our National Parks must, in addition to the two existing purposes, i.e.
 - To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Lake District National Park; and;
 - To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

Have a third statutory purpose to look after the people that live there, as proposed in the Landscapes Review proposals 17 & 23.

KCHT calls upon the Government to adopt the proposed new third statutory purpose for National Parks with one minor change to the wording, namely to place community before economic, as it is in the new vision for protected landscapes. Both are important, but community comes first and that can lead to greater economic vitality. The revised third statutory purpose would thus read;

- ***‘To foster the community and economic vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes’.***

More needs to be done, starting with better management of the existing housing stock by;

2. Changing planning legislation to split the C3 (Dwellings) Use categories into Primary Homes, Secondary Homes and Short-term Holiday lets to control the loss of primary residential properties to second homes or holiday lets, as proposed by the LDNPA.
3. Managing further increases in the number of holiday/second homes by introducing a licensing scheme for second homes and holiday lets to control and, if necessary, cap further increases in the number of holiday/second homes, as proposed by KTC.
4. Removing financial incentives from owners of holiday lets and second homes, such as small business rates exemption, which encourage the purchase of primary residential properties for this purpose, as proposed by the LDNPA.

In addition, KCHT calls on the Government to require all local authorities to charge, as a minimum, the full rate of council tax on second homes, and to consider whether charging more, as is proposed in Wales, would benefit local communities through increased funding of local services.

5. Ensuring that existing property owners abide by any current local occupancy restrictions regarding the use and sale of their properties by making enforcement of these restrictions a properly funded statutory duty.

Better management of the existing housing stock within our National Parks will not, on its own, provide the answer to the shortage of affordable housing within our local communities. We need to

do more. We need to;

6. Require National Park Authorities to assess and address the need for visitor accommodation within their Local Plans and actively support the building of holiday accommodation to take pressure off existing residential properties.
7. Provide housing that local people can afford to rent or buy either outright or through shared ownership by ensuring that;
 - Homes England funding is aligned to support housing developments that reflect local needs, including shared ownership as proposed by the LDNPA.
 - Extra funding is made available to develop infill /brownfield sites.
 - The needs of young people, including couples without children as well families, are accurately captured in Housing Needs Surveys.
 - The rate of development of affordable housing sites is aligned with current identified needs and retains land required for housing in later years.

Finally, if the new vision that 'Protected landscapes will support thriving local communities and economies' is to be realised then, in addition to a third statutory purpose for National Parks '*To foster the community and economic vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes*', we need to:

8. Bring together responsibility for all aspects to do with housing under a single authority, namely the National Park Authorities, with a new Statutory Responsibility in Law for Housing within National Parks.

Living Landscapes - Governance

We note both the findings of the review and the government's response in regard to governance of our National Parks and, in particular, the make up of governing boards. We disagree with the reviews recommendation, proposal 26, that, apart from appointment of a chair by the Secretary of State for Defra, the new National Landscapes Service should appoint all other board members. We would recommend going further and, apart from possibly the chair, have all board members elected. This would address the democratic deficit created by appointing members and, with new statutory duties '*to foster the community and economic vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes*' and responsibility for housing, bring National Park Authorities into line with governance in Local Authorities.

9. We call upon the government to introduce elected membership of National Park Boards.

If you would like a full copy of the Trust's response please contact my colleague, Colin Thorns, at colin.thorns@gmail.com.

Bill Bewley
Chairman Keswick Community Housing Trust
9 April 2022