



## Colton Parish Council

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Clerk: Ms Mandy Lane  
Lilac Cottage  
Oxen Park  
Ulverston LA12 8HG

## Chairman's Annual Report for 2013/2014

### Changes to the Council

There have been no Councillor changes this year. However, Cllr Chris Potts stood down as Vice-Chair and Cllr Vanessa Champion was elected in his place. Thanks are due to Chris for his support over the past five years.

### Activities of the Council

#### *Some successes.*

Among a small but significant list of achievements during the last year, we have finished drafting a Community-led plan which is now out for consultation; special thanks go to our Clerk, Mandy Lane, and councillors Champion and Hoyle for getting us this far. Our stand-in lengthsman, Archie Workman, has shown that he is as good with a camera as he is with a shovel or a draining rod. We have helped with the acquisition of a defibrillator to be installed in the Oxen Park phone-box and, with others, have succeeded in getting the LDNPA to send a weekly list of planning decisions.

Responding to various natural and human interventions, and under the guidance of Cllr Champion, the residents of Finsthwaite have set up a Community Response group which is already making good progress. Thanks to Mike Postle, the prospect of Superfast Broadband creeps ever closer to our parish. Finally, we have a brand-new roundabout in our parish, a development initiated by our previous Chairman, Ron Mein.

#### *Challenges ahead*

Life in rural Cumbria seems to be getting more difficult as services are withdrawn or reduced. The last year has seen a general decline in the quality of liaison with Highways; despite a reorganisation and re-launch of their services, on-the-ground improvements are few and far between: the register of priorities, maintained by the Clerk, is now ignored; highway defects are temporarily patched on an apparently random basis; and signposts and road-markings are not being renewed. Although we have not needed to chivy Highways for more grit this last winter, flooding has been a serious problem in several communities.

A meeting is to be set up to tackle the triple issues of litter, speeding and vehicle width, relating to various areas of the parish. Despite one or two positive developments, illegal off-roading and the decline of the Green Road network continue to be a priority issue. The many aspects surrounding the 'Field of Pigs' near Finsthwaite have only partially been resolved. Continuing problems with High Dam Car Park charges and the consequences for Finsthwaite have yet to be addressed with the Park. In our attempt to provide a safe and efficient footpath between Newby Bridge and Lakeside, we appear to have been thwarted by the residents of the gated development known as Landing Howe.

#### *Liaison and consultation*

The Council has produced two editions of its own newsletter this year, hand-delivered to every member of the community. We have also contributed to the three local newsletters every month, and maintain a parish council website. We continue to be involved with the High Furness Local Area Partnership (LAP) and regularly attend the High Furness Neighbourhood Forum.

The Council received 10 formal consultations covering topics ranging from police attendance at parish council meetings to the Lake District National Park Partnership plan. It responded to those which had relevance to Colton Parish.

## **Planning**

This year the Council reviewed 37 planning applications. We raised objections to six of these, expressed concerns about seven others. Of the six objections, one was granted permission, three were withdrawn and we are awaiting the outcome of the remaining two. This information can be viewed on our website.

## **Meetings**

The Council held nine scheduled meetings during the year and one additional meeting; member attendance averaged 88%. Our County and District Councillor, David Fletcher, attends meetings when his busy schedule allows; we are grateful for his support with flooding problems in Finsthwaite. We have been pleased to welcome regular visits to our meetings by members of Cumbria Police. Bill Murray (LDNPA Compliance Officer) has addressed us on various compliance matters and Carole Shaw, Chair of the Windermere Lake Users' Forum, gave a presentation about the Forum's activities.

## **Budget for the coming year**

Our Finance Working Group has continued to oversee our formal budgeting procedures and has recommended a precept increase of 5% which the full Council has approved. With considerable uncertainty over the future funding position of the principle authorities, it is prudent to maintain a reasonable reserve. A summary of accounts is attached.

## **Chairman's thanks**

In no particular order, I would like to thank Roderick Smith for his continuing and lonely quest to represent 'the public' at our meetings, Mike Postle for his excellent work on Broadband, Bobbie Dobson for carrying out the internal audit, and John Osborne and colleagues for their continuing excellent work on Bouth Village Green and Playground. I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their help and support over the last year, picking out in particular Cllr Vanessa Champion in her first year as Vice-Chair (and for work at Finsthwaite and on the Community-led Plan), Cllr Ken Dean for representing us at the LAP and at other SLDC meetings, and for his role in the work of the Finance Working Group, together with Cllr Chris Potts

Finally, as ever, heartfelt thanks are due to our Clerk, Mandy Lane, who is just managing to keep her head above the bureaucratic tide of paperwork and regulations. It is therefore doubly creditable that she has gained the CiLCA 'General Power of Competence' qualification, necessary for the Council to exercise certain powers under the Localism Act, 2011.

Cllr Colin Barr

May 2014

## **Officers of the Council 2013-2014**

**West Ward:** Cllr Colin Barr (Chair); Cllr Katherine Patterson; Cllr John Milburn

**East Ward:** Cllr Chris Potts; Cllr Vanessa Champion (Vice-chair); Cllr David Hoyle

**Central Ward:** Cllr Anne Robinson; Cllr John Watson; Cllr Ken Dean

**Clerk:** Ms Mandy Lane: Lilac Cottage, Oxen Park, Ulverston. LA12 8HG  
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### Summary of Accounts 2013/2014

Balance brought forward	7141.75
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	
Annual Precept via SLDC	10,657.54
Council Tax Grant	249.03
Bouth Village Green fundraising for replacement fence and hedge	695.90
Grant for community defibrillator for Oxen Park and Bandrake Head	1700.00
High Furness LAP - Lengthsman grant	445.00
Grant from Lengthsman from calendar revenue	30.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>20919.22</b>
<b>PAYMENTS - summary</b>	
Annual Fees for services: CALC Subscription	202.00
Council Administration Costs:	
Audit fee	120.00
Information Commissioner fee (Data Protection)	35.00
Election costs for 2012 Election	171.57
Clerk's office supplies and postage	345.36
Clerk's standard home office allowance	150.00
Web hosting fee	61.03
Insurance	521.51
Room Hire	111.00
Clerk's Travel	47.93
Councillors' Travel	152.78
Training course fees and guidance documents	83.50
Bouth Village Green & Playground management:	
RoSPA H&S Annual Inspection	78.00
Hedge & Fence replacement (grants total:£1500 received in 12/13)	2635.08
Maintenance	100.00
Clerk's salary	5169.32
Community resilience planning leaflets	35.00
Notice-board replacement and refurbishment	1035.00
Lengthsman services	1387.00
Drain rod attachments for Lengthsman work	33.69
Poppy wreath for Remembrance Service	17.00
Finsthwaite Clock Maintenance	174.00
Crake Valley Website - share of website maintenance	15.00
NW Air Ambulance grant	50.00
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>12730.77</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>	
Total income	20919.22
Total payments	12730.77
<b>To Carry Forward</b>	<b><u>8188.45</u> *</b>

*\* Note: The balance to carry forward of £8188.45 is considerably larger than the 10% contingency normally planned for and the projected year-end balance of £4623. This is due to a number of factors, principally: i) The grant of £1700 received during FY 13/14 for the defibrillator, spent after the year end, ii) the period April-July without a lengthsman, giving an under-spend of £1250, and iii) the un-projected grant of £445 from the High Furness LAP for lengthsman activities.*