

## CALDBECK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Caldbeck Parish Hall on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

PRESENT      Mrs A Cartmell (Chairman)      Mrs A D R Noble  
                    Mr W R Cowx                              Mr A Armstrong  
                    Mr A Tyson                                 Mr C Smithson  
                    Mr A Savage                                Mr D Whitson

Mrs A Ward (Clerk)

Mr Duncan Fairbairn (District and County Councillor), Richard Leafe (Chief Executive LDNPA), Iain Johnston (Kentmere Hydro Trust), Sue Clarke (Co-ordinator of the Northern Fells Group) and 26 Parishioners were present.

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors Mr H Hellon (holiday) and Mr R Knowles (holiday), Mr Graham Standring (LDNPA Ranger), PC Blain.

### MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

### CHAIRMANS REPORT and PARISH PLAN

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave her report as follows: It does not seem like a year since our last Annual Parish Meeting but it is and since 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009 we, your Parish Council have met 9 times. There are 10 of us Councillors and although obviously work and holiday commitment's do co-incide with our meeting dates our attendance record is good, as indeed it should be as there is no point in being a Parish Councillor without a degree of commitment. We have also attended Local Forums and other meetings throughout the county on your behalf on a variety of subjects.

Duncan Fairbairn, our County and District Councillor, has also attended most of our meetings and we are very grateful for the support and help he gives us. We receive regular crime reports from our local police force who attend in person when they can. Graham Standring our National Park ranger sends us reports of his activities and we have had several site meetings with him this year on a variety of topics. We are very grateful to him for keeping our footpaths in good condition and for replacing or repairing gates and stiles and endlessly trying to fill in the potholes in the car park.

We have considered various planning applications throughout the year including new houses, alterations and/or additions to existing houses, listed Building Consents, agricultural buildings and dwellings, fixed campsite plots, camping barns and others and have tried to deal with these fairly. Some we have supported, some we have not. Last year several of us attended and spoke in support of a planning appeal for the re-division of a house in a village which was dismissed on the grounds that it was creating a new dwelling which would not come into the affordable category. We also try to keep an eye on the conditions that are handed out with the decisions and try to see that they are not abused.

We have again had discussions with the National Park to try and resolve the lack of car parking space in Hesket Newmarket and are trying to persuade them to take the problem further to the Secretary of State. We have also had discussions with National Park representatives about the edges of the green in Hesket Newmarket being eroded away by traffic and hopefully this autumn they are going to make some stone edges to try and solve this. The National Park own the green as common land and it is in their interest to protect it

as their asset is gradually becoming part of the highway. This would have taken place earlier in the year but they have been diverted from their normal maintenance programmes by the floods which have destroyed a lot of their footpaths and footbridges. The National Park have also responded to our request to re-fence the pond at Hesket and remove some of the weeds, this is now a safer area.

We have continued to manage the Parish allotments at Hesket Newmarket in consultation with their Allotment Association, maintain the waiting list and make regular inspections. We have organised grass cutting in both Caldbeck and Hesket Newmarket and maintained and replaced where necessary, the various seats and litter bins throughout the Parish and keep the John Peel Shelter and the Hesket Newmarket Cross buildings insured. We have also made a contribution towards the cutting of the grass in Caldbeck Churchyard.

In response to a request from one of our parishioners we held a referendum as to whether the community would like us to try and find a way of excluding sheep from the two villages possibly by way of cattle grids. Every household in the Parish was invited to vote and it was decided by a majority of 77 to take no action on this.

We spent a considerable amount of time, and our Clerk even longer, investigating the possibility of dredging Caldbeck pond. This came about initially as the annual weed, English fennel pondweed, is increasing its coverage of the pond. This weed appears in the summer and dies back in the winter. We tried last year to pull some out which proved impossible and then investigated the possibility of draining the pond and removing the silt complete with weed. We had discussions with the Environment Agency who were very helpful and investigated the need for various licences. Eventually we decided that it could well have turned out to be a very costly exercise which involved a lot of uncertainties and so have shelved this project for the moment. We shall continue to keep an eye on the level of silt in the pond and possibly think about this at a stage in the future. The pond has been dredged of its silt several times but before the days of Environment Agency rules and regulations. We are also in the process of re-negotiating our agreement with the County Council for the maintenance of the pond area.

We have had several visits from the Highway Steward during the year and have provided him with long lists of things to do for us which he has endeavoured to carry out. Amongst other things he has made some good gullies on Ratten Row which have helped to take the water off the road when we have had very heavy rainfall and with the help of his metal detector he has discovered long lost drain covers on Wath Brow which he has been able to clear and make useable again. Some Councillors and others have also had two sessions at clearing the litter from the Blue Gate car park area and Ratten Row. It was particularly bad this year after the snow and visiting sledgers. We continue to look after the Speed Indicator Device on a voluntary basis when it is our turn to have it in the Parish and also continue to press the police to visit us with their speed guns the following week. So far they have been unable to carry out this request but you have been warned!

We have, of course, kept up our relentless reporting of potholes to the Highways Agency and also had a go at Duncan Fairbairn on every possible opportunity to try and get these mended. We are still pressing for the closure of Watery Lonning to traffic and also the road beside the green at Hesket Newmarket to make the entrance to the play area safer. We also supported the residents of Nether Row in their objection to the new electricity transformer that appeared on two large poles after the electricity cables had been hidden underground. It appeared to us to totally defeat the object of making the area cable free when the transformer high in the air was a worse eyesore. We are awaiting the result of this.

Hesket Newmarket swept the board with three awards in the Cumbria in Bloom and Tidy Village competition in 2009, Caldbeck didn't do too well but we are hoping for better things this year. Everyone was helpful in sprucing up the villages and although it is a bit of an effort to enter the competition it does have the desired effect of making us all look a little more carefully at our surroundings. We are also extremely grateful to all the parishioners who quietly help each year with grass cutting, strimming, sweeping etc on a voluntary basis to make the villages better places.

During the year we have also tried to keep the aims of the Parish Plan in our minds. As you know this was completed in 2005.

This year we have had success in negotiating with the Methodist Chapel for the use of their disabled toilet for visitors to Caldbeck and the area. Access to the Chapel lobby is to be by radar key with the Council providing the locks and we will also contribute to the cleaning and insurance. A notice will be displayed by the existing public toilets directing visitors to the Chapel.

We have continued to press for gritting of the roads in the winter of the main through routes in particular the roads in and out of Hesket Newmarket. No success there yet but we have provided more home made salt bins in the area and are hopeful of the Highways Agency providing Hesket Newmarket with some new ones before next winter.

The website continues to improve and Jim Cox has this year handed over his job as moderator to Edward Spratt. We are very grateful to Jim for all he has done for the website and also to Edward for volunteering to carry on the good work. I would recommend the site to you and I know Edward would welcome any suggestions for its further improvement.

We also continue to support the work of the Northern Fells Group and the First Responders Group.

The Red Squirrel group continues to monitor the reds and greys and reds have been seen in the Howk area again, and no greys, which is good but the pox is raging all round us

This next year we shall continue to look at the aims of the Parish Plan and hopefully take a few more ideas to fruition.

For those of you who are unsure about how the Parish Council works, I can tell you that it is entirely dependent on its Clerk. We are extremely lucky to have a tireless, efficient and interested Clerk who also holds the title of Responsible Financial Officer and I would like to thank her for being so responsible and helpful throughout the year.

Last year I made a mistake and said that the Parish Council elections would be held this year. I am sorry you have got us for another year but then it is your chance not only to vote but also to stand for election. Come and join us, let's have a contested election with lots of you wanting to play your part in the running of your community.

### **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

Receipts for the year totalled £10,270.72 with payments of £9,384.10, creating a surplus of £886.62. The Clerk explained that this was to be held over in reserves towards costs relating to the disabled toilet which had been budgeted for in 09/10 but will actually be incurred this summer.

### **GUEST SPEAKERS**

The Guest Speakers were Richard Leafe, the Chief Executive of the Lake District National Park, and Iain Johnston from the Kentmere Hydro Trust. Richard Leafe described the vision for sustainable development within the National Park, aiming for a prosperous economy diversifying and broadening beyond the traditional agriculture and tourism. He said that vibrant communities need affordable housing for local need and that there would be more flexibility in approaching this need. The LDNPA is trying to aim for a world class visitor experience combined with protecting the natural environment, and transport is a major issue. They are aiming to predicate public transport provision on visitors' needs rather than residents' needs, hoping that residents will then benefit from the additional transport. Another aim is to protect the spectacular landscape, watching for pollution, monitoring the effects of climate change and reducing flood risk. The LDNPA is exploring the transition to a low carbon future and is developing planning policies to promote hydro power. There were 200 hydro power plants in the National Park area 100 years ago, now only 20 remain. Some infrastructure remains and the LDNPA identified 50 high head possibilities for development but environmental concerns have reduced these to 10. The LDNPA does not want industrial

scale wind turbines in the Park but will support some individual turbines for individual businesses. Solar power is a developing area with plans for solar panels that resemble slate. Other renewable energy possibilities are Ground source heat pumps, Biomass plants such as wood burning boilers where coppicing makes it viable, and farms installing Waste to Energy plants.

Iain Johnston gave a presentation on the Kentmere Hydro Project, a charitable company being run by Kentmere residents. This ambitious project will cost £1.6 million pounds but will earn £175,000 a year from selling hydro power to the national grid. (The plant will generate much more electricity than the valley residents need – hence the sale of generated electricity to the national grid). They are optimistic that £1,000,000 will be provided in grants, having already achieved much of this, and then once the loans for the remaining costs are repaid the money from the plant will benefit the valley—the church building, improvements to broadband, nature conservation and so on. The proposed turbine will operate for eighty years with very little maintenance which means that the carbon used in manufacture is more than paid back by the low carbon energy produced. Iain’s visual presentation brought the project to life for the audience and the dedication of the volunteers to the project was clear. They have cleared a number of hurdles already and are in negotiation with Natural England re environmental concerns as they move towards achieving planning permission for the pipe and turbine house. During questions to the speakers Richard Leafe explained that the Sustainable Development Fund can provide grants to community groups or to private individuals or businesses wanting to develop natural energy plants in the National Park as long as these accord with the necessary environmental protection.

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – OPEN DISCUSSION

The first matter discussed was the leaking drain and hole in the road by the Market Cross in Heskett Newmarket. The Clerk was able to report that this was definitely on the Highways’ agenda for urgent repair in the very near future. The second issue raised was the small size of the Notice board in Heskett Newmarket and a request that it might be replaced by a bigger one protected by glass doors. The Clerk was asked to put this on the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> May.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm. Fairtrade refreshments were provided after the meeting and Richard Leafe and Iain Johnston stayed on to answer more questions from interested parishioners.