

CALDBECK PARISH COUNCIL

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Ms Katherine Fairclough
Chief Executive
Cumbria County Council

Dear Ms Fairclough

On 2 April I wrote on behalf of Caldbeck Parish Council to request a copy of Dan Barton's report on the Caldbeck Hesket Newmarket footpath under Freedom of Information. I was informed by the County Council that the deadline for receipt of a substantive reply was 1 May. I have not received any reply.

You will recall that I wrote to you on 10 December 2017 asking if you would intervene in Caldbeck Parish Council's request for County Council support for establishing a footpath between Caldbeck and Hesket Newmarket. The County Council decided to treat my letter as a complaint and instigated its complaints procedures. The original timetable for a reply was 8 January. The Parish Council recognised this was unrealistic but expected the investigation to be concluded early in the new year, ideally by 31 January which would have given an extra 3 weeks, more than covering the holiday period.

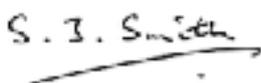
As set out in my earlier letter, 5 February was the first opportunity to meet Dan Barton and the Parish Council was pleased with the meeting. Dan Barton thought we would receive a copy of his report and we fully expected a reply by the end of February. With no response to any requests for progress, I therefore wrote on 2 April.

It seems extraordinary that the County Council has not been able to meet any timetables it has set nor statutory Freedom of Information timetables. It is difficult to understand why the County Council, as lead authority for local government in Cumbria and which espouses working in partnership with organisations drawn from across the public sector and communities including parish councils, does not seem to recognise accepted standards of courtesy for replying to correspondence.

Caldbeck Parish Council is giving the County Council a final opportunity to provide a copy of Dan Barton's report and its conclusions in light of the report. Caldbeck's Annual Parish Meeting is to be held on 14 May and Caldbeck Parish Council expects to receive the information requested by 10 May. If that deadline is missed, Caldbeck Parish Council will make a formal complaint to the Information Commissioner and copy correspondence to Trudy Harrison MP, Sue Hayman MP, Rory Stewart MP, and Peter McCall Police and Crime Commissioner, all of whom have written to you in support of our request for County Council action over the footpath.

I look forward to hearing from you by 10 May.

Yours sincerely



Simon Smith