

Caldbeck Annual Parish Meeting.

Chairman's Report given on the 9th May 2023.

Exactly a year ago we held our last Annual Parish Meeting, since when we have seen a few changes, in institutions and structures above our heads so to speak, and in our own Council.

In June last year Caldbeck Parish celebrated HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This last weekend we have celebrated the Coronation of our new King. Angela Glendinning our fellow present Councillor and Audrey Noble a former Councillor were thanked a year ago for taking on the Platinum Jubilee and are to be thanked once again firstly for making that a great success, and now for masterminding the Coronation Parish celebrations which we have just held, and making that another great success. I hope you agree they are getting quite good at it now.

Then we have had a change in Local Government. The Cumbria County Council and Allerdale District Council both ceased to exist on the 1st April this year. The County Council made an unsuccessful "death row" challenge to the Courts, which did not succeed. We were told the change would save money, but the first effect has been a 7% rate rise. Let us hope for better things.

Mike Johnson was our County Councillor, and he was also the last leader of Allerdale, and the good news is that he is now our representative on the new Cumberland Council. I say that not because of his political affiliation as we don't do politics, but because he has attended every Parish Council meeting during the last year, bar one when he had a clash of appointments, and chaired our recent footpath meeting for us, and he has made things happen for us. He has my sincere thanks and his time and attention are much appreciated.

Then within the Council we have had a change or two. Paul Graham resigned in the autumn. He was an active Councillor and helped us a lot with his reports on trees and doing unpaid tree work for us, as indeed he continues to do helping with tree work conservation area applications to the National Park and advice for which we thank him.

Sue Robson from Hesket Newmarket was prevailed upon to stand as a Hesket Councillor in Paul's place and she was co-opted earlier this year. Thank you for joining us Sue.

Ian Shaw announced he would retire today and not stand for re-election. Ian has been on the Council for 8 years. He has contributed a great deal and for a while was about the only Councillor representing Hesket Newmarket's interests - where he walks most days from his home in Caldbeck, so familiarising himself with all the potholes and blocked gulleys on the way. Thank you very much Ian for your contribution to the parish and community business over the years. Please continue to come and tell us all we have left undone which we ought to have done.

John Brown from Hesket Newmarket also announced what he has said is his age related retirement, but I think it may be more to do with his holiday commitments in Cyprus and elsewhere. John came on to the Council 4 years ago. He has been our main planning adviser, and has helped our clerk David comply with money balance checking rules, as indeed he has kindly agreed to continue doing. Thank you John.

We are in an election year for this Parish Council, which meant nominations were required. As it turned out there were 10 nominations for 10 places so no election was held. We welcome today to the Parish Council David Sutherland from Upton and Mike Warren from Friar Row as our new Councillors.

I thank all the Councillors for all they have done and are yet to do, because without their voluntary time and effort nothing would be done, and thanks are a Parish Councillor's only reward.

The other change now happening is that Dr Geoff Davies who has been our Northern area rep. at the LDNPA is now stepping down from that role after 9 years. We thank him for his newsletters and for representing us.

So what has been done.

Allerdale transferred the public loos in Caldbeck to the Parish Council this last year and to gave us £9000 towards repair costs. The Parish Council looked into finding a suitable alternative site for a new build loo block central to the village without success. Suitable sites were either not available or would cost too

much to develop. So the repair of the existing loos has now been instructed using the grant money. In the meantime thanks to Val Macfadzean for keeping them clean and serviced. Easter saw exceptionally high usage this year, she reported, with the many mothers and children here for an Easter Bunny hunt organised by the Muddy Duck café.

Mark Binney has continued as our one day a week lengthsman, as well as grass cutter, and as well as cleaning drains and gullies he has started making stone edges to Heskett front green and repaired the potholes in Caldbeck car park. The tarmac damage on the access slope to Heskett car park needed professional resurfacing and the work has been ordered and is to be done very soon.

The car parks in both villages, now owned by the Parish Council, are well used, and on many weekends the car parks are nowhere near big enough to cope. The car park donation boxes took £3002 in the 12 months to 31st March 2023 which with £243 from wayleave payments on other land also acquired from the LDNPA in 2021 provides a good return on the outlay of £10000 which itself was kindly donated. We hope the wayleave payment will soon increase as BT have now surveyed all their kit on under and over our land, on which we have asked for a wayleave. The property the community owns also provides other income if and when easements or land are sold as happened last year when £4500 was received.

I hope you agree that despite the property being registered as common land which restricts any works our taking the property on so it is actively looked after and its income is used for its maintenance is better than it all being out of local control with its income going anywhere in the Lakes.

The Caldbeck to Heskett footpath project has been ongoing since the 2005 Parish Plan and has probably been on every Parish Council agenda since. This year the Parish Council organised a second Consultation across the Parish and held a public meeting chaired independently by Mike Johnson to discuss the issues in April. The results of the questionnaire sent out with the Consultation are about to be publicised by our Clerk, and the Parish Council may be making

decisions very shortly at its next meeting which immediately follows this Annual Parish Meeting, with those results in mind.

The Upton Street light has been replaced, with many thanks again to Mike Johnson at whose instance Allerdale delivered and fixed the new lamp post, and to the Caldbeck Parish Hall Committee and John Carter who allowed the electricity to be taken from the Hall through their properties to power the light.

As a parting gift from his Allerdale Councillor's fund Mike Johnson has also given £1400 towards the costs of new Parish notice boards, for Caldbeck centre and by Caldbeck school. They have been ordered and are awaited.

The law requires Planning Authorities to consult Parish Council on planning applications. Most applications are uncontentious, and receive the Parish Council's "no objection", a middle road between an objection (which requires reasons) and an expression of support (which also requires reasons). Whatever we say seems to have little bearing on the outcome of any application, and there is usually no come back from planning officers in response to our submissions. I get the impression that their having to consult us at all may irritate them. Anyway we voice our views, and try and reflect what the community feels about applications, and it would be good to actually have more feed back before finding our views are binned.

If you in the parish, listening to this or reading it, have views or suggestions for things which might improve our parish please tell us, either by coming to one of our meetings or by emailing our Clerk, or speaking to a councillor. You are entitled to your say, and I assure you we will listen and I hope give you feedback.

I mention our Clerk. David McGuffie has been our clerk for 18 months now, and I hope he enjoys it as much as we appreciate his work and organisation of our activities. Thank you David for mastering the complexities of the accounting and other procedures we are saddled with as a local government organisation, while we as councillors swim blissfully above and ignorant of the red tape requirements which you ensure we meet.

To end where I started we thank all those who give time to the community in litter picking, road and pavement sweeping Himalayan balsam pulling, or whatever, and to those who give time and energy to make things happen in the community as we saw in our platinum jubilee and this last coronation weekend, with lots of helpers and participants for all the events. King Charles would no doubt commend the community volunteering which happens here, because it is great.

Thank you for listening.

Tim Cartmell

Chairman Caldbeck Parish Council