

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM CALC

For District Association meeting on Thursday 5th March 2020

1.Sustainable Transport Conference

I attended this in November 2019, along with parish councils, local business and travel companies. Around 20 million tourists visit the Lake District each year, with independent surveys showing nearly two thirds of businesses find congestion a problem and one third of visitors have difficulty parking. There were presentations giving examples of car free travel in National Parks and on travel behaviour. Various points arose out of discussions, such as “road use charging...which is fair, flexible and smart and does not penalise residents and businesses should be seriously investigated” and “public transport needs to be better co-ordinated so that trains connect with buses.” The conference findings will go to: the sustainable transport group of the Lake District National Park Partnership; Transport for the North (a government organisation set up to co-ordinate and improve travel across the north); Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. Conference notes and presentations can be found at: www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/News/transport-rerouted The final proceedings and recommendations are expected in the New Year.

2.Upper Kent Local Area Partnership

This is the only Local Area Partnership (LAP) that is currently meeting. It met in November 2019. Issues from the parishes included speeding traffic (Old Hutton, Burneside) and poor verge cutting (Longsleddale, Kentmere). B4RN has been installed to every house in Longsleddale. There are village hall improvements for New Hutton and Kentmere. New Hutton shared its work on resilience planning, by which it had identified issues, assessed risks and formulated a plan of action. UU has submitted its scoping documents to multiple local planning authorities for Haweswater aqueduct project. Funding approval from OFWAT is expected in December 2019 and if so, UU is expecting to carry out public exhibitions in spring 2020. SLDC Community Liaison Team was a suggested item for the next meeting in March 2020. This is a new initiative by SLDC to work more closely with parishes and will be in operation by March 2020.

3.Get Safe Online Training

This cyber proficiency training (which is funded by the Cumbria Police & Crime Commissioner) is due to come to an end in June this year. The training gives attendees the knowledge and capability to make themselves safe and protect their online security. Feedback from previous sessions has been very positive. I know that I learnt a lot on the one that I attended. There are 5 sessions left to allocate by June. SLDC Locality Project Officer, Jemma Fells, has asked that anyone who may be interested in having a training session for parish councils, local business or community groups, to get in touch with her on: jemma.fells@southlakeland.gov.uk Each session needs at least 15 attendees to run. Topics

covered include: updates on the latest scams, creating secure passwords, shopping and banking online securely, social media, and how to prevent and report fraud, identify theft and abuse but it can be tailored to suit the group. It lasts about an hour or so.

4.NALC Health & Wellbeing Case Studies

It is a booklet of case studies to help parish councils see examples of action that can be taken to benefit the health and wellbeing of residents. There are several chapters, namely: creating healthier communities; Crohn's and colitis; dementia; loneliness; mental health; social prescribing; transport; young people, so it is designed to incorporate all areas of health and wellbeing. It can be found on the NALC website at: www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/helth-and-wellbeing Having had a read myself, there are some excellent examples in this publication and not all from large, town councils.

5.EA Kendal Flood Prevention Scheme

An article in 9th January edition of the Westmorland Gazette confirmed that funding of £75.6 million has been secured for the entire cost of the three phase project. Planning permission has already been granted by SLDC for Phase 1 of the project which largely concerns flood defences in the town itself and construction starts in the summer. There should be detailed information on the scheme (through a Kendal Scheme Information Hub) soon. With total funding in place, the Environment Agency (EA) will now start work on survey work and data gathering for Phases 2 and 3 in order to submit planning applications later this year. The January newsletter of the Kent Catchment Flood Risk Management Scheme (available at: www.thefloodhub.co.uk/kendal) gives more information on the phases, plus it details 4 natural flood management projects underway or in design, namely peatland restoration in the Kent catchment uplands; flow routing at Staveley; storage ponds at Stockbeck, Kendal; restoration of a culverted watercourse at Town View, Kendal.

6.BT Payphones Set for Closure

Another article in the Westmorland Gazette (9th January edition) talked about how ten phone boxes in South Lakeland are set to close. BT said that the decision had been made following a period of public consultation facilitated by SLDC. The full list of boxes closing is: Newton-in-Cartmel; Lindale (opposite the police station); Grange-over-Sands (Allithwaite Road); Hale (opposite the Kings Arms); Milnthorpe (near Church Street crossroads); Kendal (Sandylands Road, Hayclose Road, Castle Grove, Bonning Gate near Carus Green Golf Club); Kearsywick (Carnforth). Some other boxes that were threatened (eg. Ings and Staveley) are being considered for "adoption", which means that they could be taken over by the community and remain open, potentially with a different function, such housing a defibrillator or displaying artwork. The future of a further fifteen boxes is being considered in a second consultation. This list includes one by Waterhead Pier at Ambleside.

7.England Coast Path

Natural England has now completed its planning work for the section of trail and coastal margin between Silecroft and Silverdale (112 km), taking in the Duddon/Leven/Kent estuaries, Morecambe Bay, Cartmel and Furness Peninsulas, Arnside and Silverdale AONB. It has submitted an updated coastal access report, accompanying Habitats Regulations Assessment and Nature Conservation Assessment for this stretch. Its compendium of reports, describing proposed changes to public access, were published on 8th January 2020 and can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-silecroft-to-silverdale The report was drawn up in partnership with CCC. The plans include some miles of new path, where people could not previously access the coast. There is a call for representations (by any person) and objections (by owners and occupiers of affected land) on the proposed changes until 4th March 2020. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will then make a decision about the reports when all the representations and objections have been considered. Establishment of the new access arrangements will not begin until that decision has been made but if approved the route will become part of the England Coast Path, which is being developed around the entire English coast and will become the newest National Trail.

8.DEFRA Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund

There is currently a £3million grant fund from Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for the update and refurbishment of village halls so they are fit for purpose and provide activities which improve health and wellbeing/loneliness or have a positive impact on the environment or support the local rural economy. The grant is up to 20% of the eligible costs, with a minimum of £10,000 and a maximum grant of £75,000, with greater emphasis on applications that have secured most of the funding. The deadline is tight, namely 31st March 2020. The fund is managed by ACRE and supported by its county network (eg. ACT). More information, for example on eligibility and examples of work, can be found at: www.fundingforall.org.uk/funds/defra-village-hall-improvement-grant-fund/

9.YDNPA Local Plan Consultation

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) is starting the process of creating a new Local Plan as the current Local Plan was prepared before the National Park was extended by nearly a quarter, into parts of Eden and South Lakeland in Cumbria. The new plan is hoped to run from 2023 until 2040 and there is a dedicated page on the authority website www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/living-and-working/planning-policy/local-plan-2023-40/ which lists what the new Local Plan can and can't do. There was a survey that was open until 14th February 2020 and any comments received will be used to inform the next stages of the Local Plan process. YDNPA and the local district councils have commissioned new studies on population, housing and socio-economic trends to underpin the consultation.

10. Consultation on Increase in Police Part of Council Tax

Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner had a consultation on the police part of the council tax precept until 14th February, with an online survey. The proposal was to increase the police part of the council tax by 3.5% (equating to £8.91 in 2020/1, a government announcement provided for raising council tax precept by up to £10 a year for a Band D property). The press release talked about how by increasing the police part of the council tax in the last two years, the number of police officers has been increased by 45. Of a government announcement of additional funding for 20,000 new officers across England, Cumbria has been allocated 51. Police officer numbers should reach 1,216 next year in the county. Chief Constable, Michelle Skeer, said that some of the new officers are “visible in local communities, tackling local crime. The other officers have dealt with the often unseen element of policing...such as safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people, managing dangerous offenders, online fraud...as well as cross-border crime...such as supply of drugs, ATM theft, theft of quadbikes and plant from rural communities.”

11. Public Consultation on A590

There was a public consultation in February, as a result of Highway England officers hosting discussions with stakeholders about the section between Greenodd and Haverthwaite. Highways England wants members of the public to suggest improvements especially at accident blackspots (including Bouth Lane End and the Haverthwaite junction). Once improvements have been identified, Highways England will then see to secure funding from central government. It wants to identify a package of measures that have been developed with the community in order to make a strong case for investment. (Article in Westmorland Gazette, 6th February).

12. Increase in County Council Part of Council Tax

Plans have been put forward to increase the council tax precept for the county council. Taxpayers in Cumbria can expect a 3.99% increase in the county council element of council tax bills for 2020/2021 (equating to £55 more a year for a Band D property). With ten years of cuts to the budget from central government, county councillors felt that an increase in council tax was a necessary step to continue funding services (Article in Westmorland Gazette, 6th February).

13. SLDC Local Plan Review

There was a briefing for parish councils by SLDC Strategy Lead Specialist, Dan Hudson, on 30th January at Kendal town hall, which I attended. We were given some background on ageing population, high housing costs, health inequalities and climate change. It was explained that the new Local Plan will run from 2023 until 2040 and that it will combine a Core Strategy, Land Allocations and Development Management Policies into a single document, whilst Arnsdale and Silverdale Development Plan Document (drawn up with

Lancaster City Council) will be retained. There are various reasons to review the current Local Plan, such as reassessing allocated sites that have not come forward and updating policies to ensure energy efficiency in buildings. The annual housing target may need revising, from 400 homes per annum to 290. There will be multiple evidence base studies to draw on (eg. flood risk, housing land, green infrastructure). Early engagement is from mid-February until mid-May. There will be a consultation on issues and options this autumn and then a consultation on a draft plan (with preferred options) in 2021, with a view to submitting it in 2022, ready for examination and adoption in 2023. As part of the early engagement, there are “drop in” events at Kirkby Lonsdale, Grange-over-Sands, Ulverston, Kendal and Milnthorpe. There is short survey with 6 questions and a longer one with 30 questions to answer online through the Local Plan Review website:

www.southlakeland.gov.uk/LocalPlanReview There will be articles in the SLDC newsletter and the Westmorland Gazette, plus flyers and posters for display boards. SLDC is keen that parish councils help with promoting these events and surveys amongst their communities. There were questions from parish councillors present. They wanted this new Local Plan to reflect carbon reduction targets. They suggested: the need for smaller/cheaper market housing (not just executive homes + affordable); housing for older people (so not stuck in large, unsuitable housing); affordable housing of 1 or 2 bedrooms for youngsters and retired (not just 3 bedrooms for families); more development briefs (as greater community consultation). Dan felt that any Neighbourhood Plans are a statutory planning document until the community decides to refresh them, though it would be good to review every 5-10 years as things change.