

ANNUAL REVIEW

2022-2023

CALC
cumbria association
of local councils



FUTURE FOCUSED | MEMBER LED

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Welcome to CALC's annual review

In December 2022, I was honoured to be asked to become the Chair for CALC to provide support and leadership during a time of significant change. With the 6 Districts becoming 2 unitary authorities, the CALC executive realised that our organisation needed to be able to respond and provide changing support to our members as we moved from being the third tier to the second tier of local government. Of significance will be the move to a Company Limited by Guarantee, with Executive Members becoming Directors, placing us on a much firmer footing. In line with this, we have worked with the shadow authorities and our members to produce a revised business plan which reflects the expectations of both parties.

We are fortunate to have Sonia leading a strong team of 4 part time staff, who have been responsive to change. This has included delivering new areas of focus such as resilience, changes to voting requirements, delivery of wider training and support to our members. A big thank you to Sonia and the team who can all be relied on the 'go the extra mile'.

I am pleased that as the new unitary authorities evolve into strong organisations, they have recognised the role of CALC and the importance of engaging effectively with town and parish councils. We look forward to building on these relationships as we plan for the years ahead, as working together will ensure our communities are strong and able to grasp opportunities. Finally, I would like to thank Sue Castle - Clarke for her chairmanship over the past 3 years and to David for the time he served as president. Both stimulated CALC to move forward to be in a stronger position. Chris Shaw persuaded me and supported me to become involved in CALC and I thank him for the opportunity this has presented. My thanks must also go to the executive members who give freely of their time and expertise.

As we look forward to 2023/24, we know that building relationships with Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness and the Lake District National Park authority, including their various local offers, is going to be of paramount importance. But CALC exists for its members, and we will all do everything we can to support our Town and Parish Councils to be recognised as pivotal to their communities.

Mary Bradley
Chair, CALC



Chief Officer's review

The front cover of the Annual Review this year reflects the whole of the six districts, we at CALC have been working with throughout 2022/2023. I have been fortunate this year to have spent time in all these areas and even though I have worked in Cumbria all my life I have driven through villages that I have never been to before and have recognised the names of parish councils that I have only spoken to previously on the phone. I have personally been really impressed with the work being carried out by Town and Parish Councils which is why CALC selected "How Parish and Town Councils are making a difference" as the theme for the 2022/2023 annual review. Throughout this review we hope to reflect on the good work you are doing which will hopefully inspire other councils to do the same.

From a CALC perspective we have again seen some staff changes this year with Julie Hendry leaving CALC early in the year, this was followed by the retirement of a very long serving member of staff Chris Shaw at the end of the year. Chris started to work for CALC in 2007 and his attendance at our team meetings is missed by all. Following Chris's retirement CALC consulted with staff to change the staffing structure to reflect the two new unitary authorities with Lindsay Nicholson being appointed to the role of Parish Support Officer for Westmorland and Furness Council and Kate Grove being appointed to the role of Parish Support Officer for Cumberland Council.

CALC has also taken this opportunity to consider it's own governance arrangements with the membership initially agreeing to CALC applying to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, this has since been superseded by an agreement to move to a Private limited Company by guarantee in 2023/2024.

During the year we worked with the two Shadow Unitary Authorities, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council to ensure that Town and Parish Councils were updated on the work of the Programme Board, by holding virtual events and circulating the LGR newsletter on a weekly basis. We also delivered free Community engagement and planning training for all councillors wishing to attend to give parish and town councils an insight in how to engage with their communities and develop parish plans, enabling them to start to have conversations with their parishioners on what their views might be with regards to taking on services or assets in the future. The take up of this training has been very positive and it will continue to be delivered for anyone who is interested in attending.

In all it has been a very busy year with support for Town and Parish Councils being our key priority. There have been new training opportunities created, guidance and toolkits developed, with new staff learning the ropes. As new governance arrangements for CALC are being put in place, we have continued to be a crucial link between Town and Parish Councils and the new Shadow Unitary Authorities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support through your membership subscriptions, which together with financial support from the local authorities and the LDNPA keeps CALC supporting you.

Kind regards

Sonia Hutchinson
Chief Officer, CALC



332,606

Of the electorate in Cumbria live in parishes that are CALC members

97%

of Cumbria's parish councils are members of CALC (227 out of 233)

56%

of Cumbria's parish meetings are CALC members (19 out of 34 total)

6

District Associations offering members opportunities to link locally

12

Executive Committee members from across the county leading the association

5

part-time employees (Chief Officer, Town & Parish Development Officer and 3 Parish Support Officers)

1000+

queries from members across Cumbria answered during 2022/2023

288

councillors and clerks from across Cumbria trained during 2022/2023

£7,981,725

raised in precepts during 2022/2023 by Cumbria's town and parish councils

Strategic Management Plan 2020/25

The CALC Executive Strategic Management Plan 2020 - 2025 helps us prepare for the future and although CALC Governance arrangements are changing our vision, mission, objectives and values remain the same.

Our Vision

For Cumbria's Local Councils and Parish Meetings to be indispensable to their community.

Our Mission

Cumbria Association of Local Councils will be future focused and member led to support, promote, and develop local councils within Cumbria for the benefit of those who live, learn and work within their parishes.

Our Objectives

- Manage the organisation effectively to ensure it remains financially sustainable
- Maintain and grow the current membership level
- Provide mentoring for new clerks
- Expand guidance for local councils in line with new legislation and the emerging priorities of our partners and communities
- Publicise the activities and achievements of local councils to the general public
- Raise the profile of the Local Council Award Scheme
- Demonstrate the benefits of a qualified clerk to increase uptake of the Certificate in Local Council Administration
- Facilitate performance improvements within local councils by delivering relevant, more varied and reflective training
- Harness the skills and experience of CALC Executive Committee

Our Values

- Leadership
- Openness
- Integrity
- Accountability
- 'Members first'



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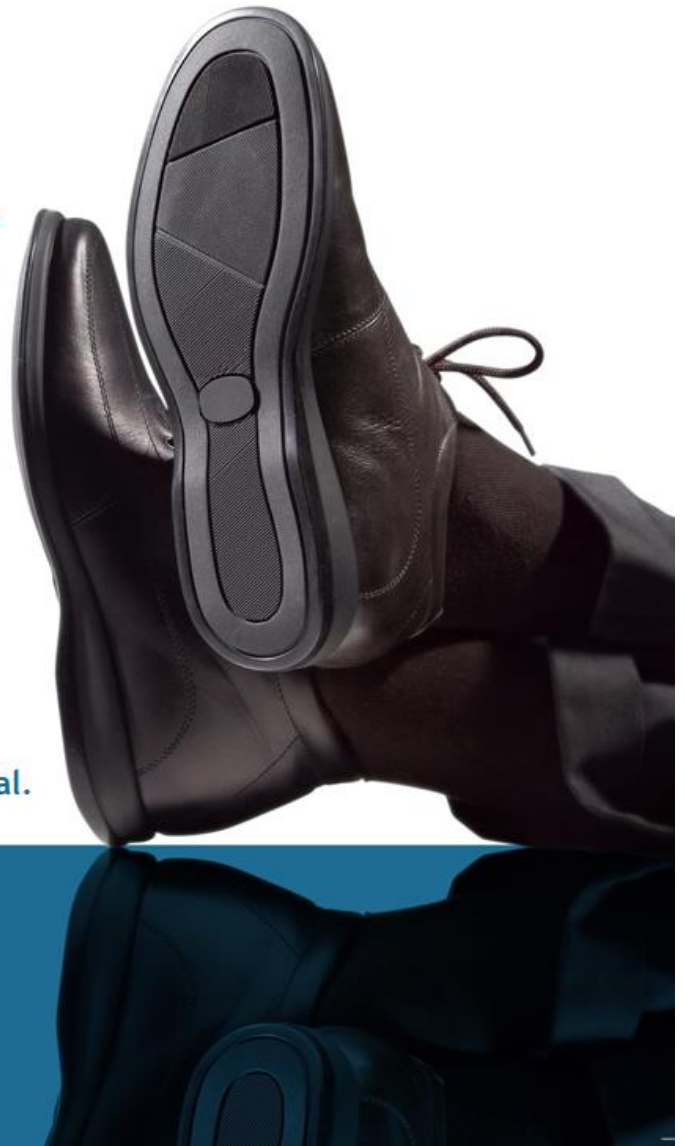
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Doing more for our members

One of our core values is 'members first' and we have listened to what you have asked for:

- YES** ➤ We have reviewed the Governance arrangements for CALC and have agreed to move to a Limited Company by guarantee.
- YES** ➤ We have continued to send members regular updates on Local Government Re-organisation, national updates from NALC and information from partner organisations.
- YES** ➤ We have continued to use Social Media to keep councils up to date using Twitter/X, and Facebook.
- YES** ➤ We continue to highlight what member organisations have been doing through the CALC Newsletter which also covers legislative updates and resilience / training updates.
- YES** ➤ We have again extended the variety of training courses and virtual events that we provide to include topics you have said you are interested in.
- YES** ➤ We renewed our partnership with Steve Parkinson Associated for financial advice and Wellers Hedleys Solicitors for legal advice, as we know you value their input.

How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Parish and Town Councils across all areas of Cumbria have been undertaking projects for the benefit of their communities. Below are just a few of the projects that we have been told about and would like to share with you:

Burneside Community Tree Planting

In early December 2020 Burneside Parish Council successfully planted a copse of 30 saplings on Low Tagglesshaw with the help of volunteers. The saplings were a mix of native species and were supplied free of charge by the Woodlands Trust, via the Community Tree Pack initiative. Low Tagglesshaw is located on Potter Fell and it is here that Burneside Parish Council looks after an area of Parish land. The land is part of open fell and is marked by four boundary stones. It takes the name Low Tagglesshaw from a small tarn close by. Due to the location of the land there were several important decisions and processes the Parish Council had to follow before planting could commence.



Magic Maps, which is a DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) mapping tool was the first point of call, along with a site visit. Priority habitat layers showed that part of the land was mapped as upland heathland. This was mainly around the tarn which provides a great wetland habitat. For these reasons it was decided to leave this area undisturbed and instead focus the proposed planting on one of the adjacent bracken covered raises. Magic Maps can also be used to establish any other designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or National Park boundaries.

It was then time to contact the FC (Forestry Commission). Personal Councillor experience meant that having to undertake an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) enquiry had been raised. The FC use EIA regulations to consider afforestation projects. A EIA enquiry allows for an assessment or opinion of the proposal to be given. The first step is to contact your local FC Woodland Officer, the FC pages on Gov.uk provides Woodland Officer details. Using the FC mapping system to check if the site is within a low risk area for woodland creation is also important, this again can be found on Gov.uk.



Although the Low Tagglesshaw planting area was small, a EIA enquiry form, along with appropriate maps and consultation was needed. Due to location and proximity to priority habitats, the site was classed as sensitive. It is important to note that EIA's are not always required; if planting is in a non-sensitive area and under 2 hectares then EIA screening can be avoided. The Parish land is within an area designated as open access land, for this reason it was important to consult the Cumbria & Lakes Local Access Forum. The Lake District National Park and NE (Natural England) were also consulted on the proposal. It is important to consult NE as planting trees in the wrong place can have a negative impact on other habitats and species. NE were supportive of the proposal and asked that soil analysis was undertaken to check that the planting area was not within peat.

Another important consultee was the tenant farmer, as part of open fell the Parish land is grazed by hefted stock. In the consultation responses tree protection was highlighted. Fencing was not an option on this planting site due to access issues and the open nature of the land. Due to potential damage from livestock and deer it was important that high quality tree guards were used. Burneside Parish Council opted for a metal mesh guard with large wooden stake, along with the traditional plastic guard and small cane.

The native species that were planted included Rowan, Wild Flowering Cherry and Silver Birch. An Alder Buckthorn was also added, in the hope of attracting Brimstone Butterflies. When planting trees, it is important to think about the species and mix chosen. A mix that provides fruit and flowers that will attract other creatures will help to increase the biodiversity of the area. The new trees at Low Tagglesshaw will be monitored closely and the idea of an annual blossom time picnic has been suggested.



How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Burneside Community Food Share

Burneside Parish Council has been working closely with the Residents Association to help tackle those in need in our local area. Some of our local residents benefit from a helping hand to make sure they are able to get the supplies they require. This need has increased due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. The Residents Association have been running a food share for a number of years, the food share is located at a central point in the village. Volunteers help to fill the food box from various sources and then locals can come and take what they need. Recently this help has been extended to food vouchers which have been given to those most in need to help with the cost of food shopping. The Parish Council and Residents Association jointly applied to the SLDC Poverty Alleviation Fund which provided some of the funding towards the cost of the vouchers.

The voucher scheme has proved successful and a big help for local families and so will continue going forward. Another benefit of the food share has been the reduction in food waste, much of the spare food collected would otherwise have been discarded. The community fridge has also helped with this as it means that perishable food can be stored safely and last longer. The community fridge was set up with help from Cumbria County Council and is located within our church which is accessible daily.

St Bees Parish Council

St Bees Parish Council has been working on several environmental projects over recent months. We have established a Climate Change Working Group which brings together parish council representatives with members of the local community to look at ways in which we can help with climate change. A number of initiatives have been identified and the group is working with local schools to involve young people in the work.

We are working with Cumbria Wildlife Trust and the Planting for Pollinators Project to re-wild a section of roadside verge. In years gone by, this verge was full of wild flowers but in recent years frequent cutting and weed control measures have reduced this to an untidy grass border. This autumn the verge will be planted with plug plants by a group of volunteers with help from the Planting for Pollinators Project and over time the verge should become an attractive feature along the route from the village to the beach.

The Parish Council manages Priory Paddock, a small wildlife garden close to the Priory. A group of volunteers led by one of our parish councillors has been working hard to restore the pond area which had become overgrown with non-native plants.

The volunteers have formed a Friends of the Priory Paddock group and have entered the RHS small copse competition. The Parish Council has provided a new interpretation board so visitors can learn more about the plants and wildlife habitat.

Children from the local primary school visit the garden and there are regular events such as pond dipping and guided tours.



Beach litter is a constant problem in coastal villages. One of our parish councillors leads a monthly beach clean attended by volunteers from the local community. We encourage visitors to the beach to pick up small amounts of litter whilst at the beach and we provide a 2 minute beach clean station mounted on the wall of the toilet block where visitors can pick up a reusable bag and litter picker to take on their walk and return them as they leave.

None of these initiatives would happen without the enthusiasm and commitment of our parish councillors - an example of how small projects can make a real difference.

How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Arnside Parish Council Wildflower Verges Project

Arnside Parish Council set up a working group in autumn 2021 to investigate the feasibility of increasing the botanical diversity of the roadside verges in the Parish and hence improve the habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. The Group was made up of Parish Councillors, a local resident and a staff member of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB. It was supported by other residents and members of the AONB, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and other expert bodies.

The initial pilot work was on three verges and work commenced in the autumn of 2021. The methodology was advised by the Arnside and Silverdale AONB and from published sources, e.g. Plantlife. The basic principle was to reduce soil fertility by removal of vegetation cuttings, thus limiting growth of rank grasses and other tall plants, thus allowing slower-growing, less vigorous flowering species to thrive. This was enhanced by introducing semi-parasitic species such as Yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and Eyebright (*Euphrasia* spp). Other flowering species were introduced as plug-plants but most of the plants which grew in the pilot verges were already present. A management regime of cutting once or twice per year, depending on circumstance, was introduced. Although the results of this process are long-term, some effects are already apparent. In all three verges, the ranker grasses and other tall, unsightly vegetation have been significantly reduced. The early outcomes are sufficiently encouraging to suggest the management processes are working.

We also decided to plant a beech hedge in the roadside area next to the recycling bins in Black Dyke Road. This project was entirely funded by the generosity of one of the working group members and planting and maintenance done by the group and other volunteers, so at no public cost. Other species were also added to the hedge, in particular Hawthorn (*Crateagus monogyna*) and Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*). The hedge has thrived and will provide a hedgerow habitat for birds and other animals as it matures.

The roadside verges project was significantly extended in the winter of 2022-23 by adding 350m of verge on Sandside Road, thanks to a grant from the AONB. This long section, untreated for several years and very unkempt, was cleared, cut, scarified and seeded with a wildflower and grass seed mix in early 2023. (The seed was paid for by a grant from the Planting for Pollinators [P for P] project of Cumbria CC and Cumbria Wildlife Trust [CWT]). Again, early results are encouraging and it will shortly be cut again and more seed and plug plants put in to speed up the improvement process. Thanks to another grant from P for P project, the Black Dyke Road verge will be cut later in the autumn and be planted with spring bulbs - snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*), native Daffodils (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*).

The Group is now looking at means of extending the project beyond the roadside verges. We feel this is an opportune moment. There has been much publicity recently about the benefits to pollinators of leaving areas of gardens uncut - 'no-mow-May', for example - and much advice about how to go about it in the popular press. We are holding a Community Plug-planting Day on 30th September to put in the spring bulbs on Black Dyke Road, to involve local people in the process directly. We also are planning a Gardening for Wildlife programme, starting with a launch event in January, to which expert speakers have been invited and which we intend to be led by residents with Council support. We have also involved the children from Arnside Primary School, who have already done some planting at the Council's site at The Beachwood and we intend this to continue. The School's activities have been supported by a small grant from P for P. An information board outlining this work has been erected at Beachwood, courtesy of a grant from the Barnes Trust and another has been designed to go up on the verge on Sandside Road at the main entrance to the village.

In conclusion, it has been a privilege to be involved with an enthusiastic and knowledgeable group of individuals from different backgrounds who all share the same passion for improving our local environment. We all want the same goal: to see more wild flowers in our village, to have more insects buzzing around the flowers and more birds feeding on the insects - and so on, up the food chain. We feel we have achieved some success so far; not only in the improvement to the roadside verges but in the knowledge we have gained, the friendships we have made and the organisations with whom we have linked. Together with the sense of community we've developed, I'd call that a good start.

If others want to draw on our experience, please do get in touch - we'd be happy to help.

How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Keswick Town Council

In July 2021, Sustainable Keswick received a grant from the Cumbria County Council Environment Fund to improve biodiversity within Keswick, and approached Keswick Town Council's Parks Trust for help in establishing a partnership between this landowner and community group. Having declared a Climate Emergency in 2020 and having made a commitment to address Climate Change and biodiversity issues at a local level, Keswick Parks Trustees allocated an area of land in Fitz Park for tree planting and carbon capture.

There have been eight organised community planting days over the last two years, organised by Sustainable Keswick and supported by the Woodland Trust and well over five hundred trees and further batches of hedging plants and woodland bulbs are planted.

'Not only will these trees eventually capture many tons of carbon over their lifetime, but they will also create a wildlife haven for nesting birds and all sorts of insect populations. There are already nesting Mallards here and who knows what other insects, small mammals and birds will establish themselves here, in and beneath these new trees over time,' said Town Councillor Sally Lansbury, who applied for the funding and also arranged the volunteer days through Sustainable Keswick.

"The Woodland Trust has been helping people plant trees and create woodland for nearly 50 years. Now, with ever increasing knowledge of climate change and biodiversity loss the simple act of planting a tree becomes even more important - we need both old and young trees throughout our landscape. Fitz Park is a perfect place where we can support local insect and bird life by managing every age of tree for now and for the future." Said Pete Leeson, Partnership Manager of the Woodland Trust.



With additional support from Keswick Mayor's fund, a path has been established through the woodland to allow community access and there are two rustic benches in place created by Parks staff using offcuts from trees felled as part of their tree management programmer.

A joint management plan has now been created for this Woodland, to ensure the role of each part of the partnership is agreed. For example, maintenance of boundaries, litter, signage, removal of tubes, trimming to maintain pedestrian width, control of invasive species.

This a great example of

community leadership within the Council, being able to create a successful partnership between a number of organisations in order to address loss of species, improve biodiversity and address carbon capture and play a small part in reducing climate heating. In the process, a new recreational space has been created. In this case it was Cumbria County Council, Sustainable Keswick, Keswick Parks Trust (Keswick Town Councillors) and the Woodland Trust together with a willing team of co-ordinated community volunteers.



How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Moresby Parish Council

Walkmill Community Woodland is a vital and much loved open space, which was saved from sale by Cumbria County Council in 2018 and is now designated as a community asset. It is important because of its significant historical and industrial heritage. West Cumbria Rivers Trust, in partnership with Moresby Parish Council and the Walkmill Activity Group, after carrying out initial surveys and consultations with local people, intend to encourage greater use of this fantastic community resource, and plan to apply for a full National Lottery Grant to fund the ongoing project. 'A Wilder Walkmill' aims to improve access for all, create new and improved habitats to support nature recovery, increase volunteering opportunities and events and activities for the local community, provide education sessions and forest schools, and also run an apprenticeship scheme to train young people in employable conservation skills.

Some of the users of Walkmill include:

Mayfield Special School, residents of a home for adults with special needs, senior residents, mothers with young children, one mother who regularly brings her two autistic teenage sons from Egremont, fills up with emotion talking about the benefit given to her family by the facility.

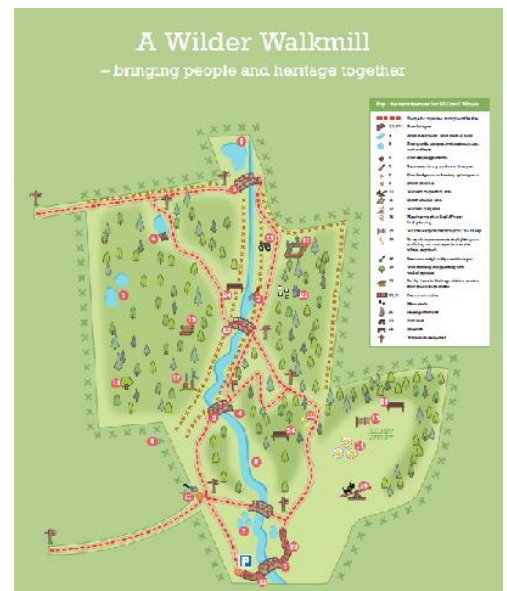
Most of this work is unseen or unrecorded, Moresby PC have had the courage to take on the responsibility of a facility used by people based all over West Cumbria (the PC are now responsible for the maintenance and insurance of a 100 acre site).

A brief history of Walkmill:

Walkmill community woodlands is 100 acres of reclaimed land on the site of Walkmill colliery (open 1870s to 1961, at one point employing 900 men). The village of Moresby Parks was a completely new village, built by Moresby Coal co., with one purpose - to accommodate the colliery workforce. Five years ago the 100 acre site was put up for sale without public access. A campaign began to stop the sale, which has resulted in the Countryside and Rights of Way act being enacted on the land, public footpath status for many of the "trods", the land being transferred in a Community Asset Transfer to the Parish Council and the bid by West Cumbria Rivers Trust to rewild the 100 acres.

Benefits of the project include:-

Flood prevention, professionally managed, more natural, all the old muddy trods (which are impassable in winter) are to be brought up to a satisfactory standard, ponds are to be added, wild flowers are to be planted, invasive plant species are to be eradicated, bridges and seats are to be provided, a memorial garden is to be created where the shafts were situated, access for the disabled is to be greatly improved, a dog training area is to be provided and many schools are using the newly created forest school area. The whole area gives so much enjoyment to so many people, we are blessed by its existence and the positive future.



The parish council have taken on responsibilities as the following 2 statements confirm:

- CCC states in the CAT agreement that the PC will not be able to completely finance the site and volunteering would be essential to the long-term future of the site.
- The lottery fund state in their agreement that a condition of the grant is that during the 4-year project, the parish must prove long term sustainability by creating a volunteer group to maintain the site.

Money has been set aside in the grant for training in all aspects of woodland management and the parish clerk has been discussing possible sources of income to improve the sustainability of the site. These are exciting times for the PC, with a little bit of trepidation, however the gains will be very worthwhile.

How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Millom Without Parish Council

Reaching the final year of the Plan - In May 2019 after extensive community consultation, the first Millom Without Parish Council Community plan was launched to run from 2019-2024. The parish council now look back, as they reach the final year of this plan and look forward to what is planned for next year.

The plan has shaped the direction of the Parish Council work, based on Parishioners priorities and the parish council are proud that the Parish Councillors have dedicated so much personal time to deliver the commitments set out in this Community Plan.

Some projects include:

Connecting Our Communities

- Focus on litter picking with establishment of the Millom Environment Group. Partnering with Sustainable Duddon they have delivered significant community clean up events. Over the past 4 years through community litter picks, over 10 Tonnes of waste has been collected from our roadsides.
- Speed reduction with the installation of the Speed Indicator Devices both at The Green and The Hill, will both support speeding through our communities.
- Upgrading of Middle Cut by working with partner organisations to provide a safe and useable path between The Hill and The Green.
- Developing new walks in support of local tourism and well being, with the development of the Stones to Stones Walk.



- Child Friendly Spaces - At the heart of the Community Plan has been the focus of creating the Play Park - a focal point for fun, relaxation and well-being - this significant investment was only possible by collaborating with Thwaites Village Hall and funding partners. We are grateful for their support.



- Promoting cycle safety, the Parish Council has now hosted two separate Cycle Events, which brings families together, with our younger resident's focusing on improving their cycle skills.



- Parish Concerns - The Plan took onboard a number of key issues which are of concern to Residents - the parish council have addressed the deteriorating state of the Phone Box (The Green which now hosts a Defib) and the Bus Shelters which have had a makeover both at The Green and The Hill. Work continues on the issue of dog fouling and any real change to this issue lies with the pet owners.



What is still to be done?

In the Final Year of the Community Plan, the parish council are focused on the delivery of two key projects

- Solar Lights Installation from The Train Station
- The Path to connect Rising Hill to The Green



How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Cockermouth Town Council

Cockermouth Councillors Richard Watson and Howard Beanland spent some time cleaning the footpath at Double Mills Bridge over the River Cocker to make it easier for wheelchair users and those with buggies, bikes or mobility problems to negotiate this section.

The Council would like members of the public to participate in the survey, which covers only footpaths and cut-throughs rather than pavements and to contact the town councillors in their ward if there are sub-standard paths in their area.

The plan is to assess the condition of the paths and collate information about the network of paths around the town. The council wants to continue to encourage people to walk and cycle around town and to avoid using cars where possible.



Cockermouth Town Council and RSPB West Cumbria Local Group have been working together to provide bird nest boxes in the Memorial Gardens by the River Derwent, Cockermouth. This is an exciting opportunity to give nature a home within the Cockermouth community.

British birds are short of nesting holes and there are plenty of reasons why. Our gardens, parks and woodland are neater and tidier than they used to be, depriving birds of natural holes to find a home and to make matters worse there are fewer handy nooks and crannies in modern buildings. The populations of many bird species are down as a result of their housing shortage.

Sixteen bird boxes of various sizes were erected on Sunday. I would like to thank RSPB West Cumbria for their assistance, the Metalcraft Community Fund for their grant of £153.50

towards our costs and Councillor David Malloy for erecting the boxes.

Cockermouth Town Council have received a grant of £6,647.90 from the Cumbria Woodlands and United Utilities West Cumbria Water Supplies Tree Planting Fund.

1212 trees have been planted in Harris Park Extension below Dale View in Cockermouth to commemorate the Queen's 70th anniversary as monarch.

The creation of this woodland supports the council's recent declaration of a climate emergency. In addition to helping to combat climate change, the new woodland will contribute to species diversity by providing valuable habitat for birds, wild animals and native plants.'



Mayor of Cockermouth, Councillor Alan Smith remarked that Harris Park Extension was designated a Queen Elizabeth II Field in Trust during the 2012 Diamond Jubilee and that it seemed fitting to plant 1212 trees there in recognition of her Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Sedgwick Parish Council - The Sedgwick Canal Wildlife Area

Sedgwick is a small rural village just south of Kendal with a population of under 500. The former Lancaster-Kendal Canal bisects the village making it a very important part of the community.

Originally completed in 1819, it linked Kendal to Preston and was busy carrying commercial traffic before being eclipsed by newer rail and road links. It closed in 1947, was dewatered in 1955 and was in SLDC council ownership when it became derelict. In April 1980, the Parish Council purchased the section of the canal located to the east of the Aqueduct in the centre of the village, for the purposes of restoring the site as a wildlife area and amenity for residents. The site includes a length of approximately 450m of the canal and comprises an area of 3.2 acres of woodland, path and canal bed. The canal towpath is a Public Right of Way and is part of the Lancaster to Kendal Towpath.

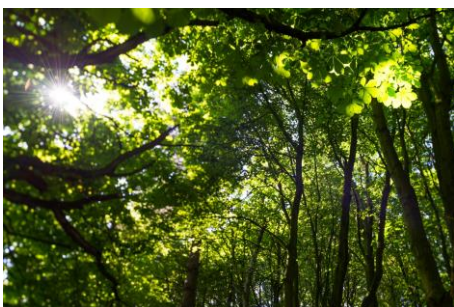
From taking ownership in 1980, the village has developed a clear vision for the area to maintain the area as a natural conservation area which acts as a haven for wildlife and a tranquil, safe and quiet place to be enjoyed by residents and visitors to respect and celebrate the built heritage of the canal to keep the area as natural as possible whilst protecting fauna and flora and the features left by the canal's legacy to protect the area as a safe and peaceful place to walk



The Council has worked hard to maintain and improve the area to achieve this vision. Several small grants and practical support from local organisations such as the WI, Scouts and Brownies, have helped with this work, but the majority of work has fallen to local residents and has been financed by the Parish Council with our extremely limited funds. Our latest project has seen the planting of native trees to replace the casualties of Ash Die Back; they now form part of The Queen's canopy. It is a much valued and much used village amenity; a peaceful place to walk and exercise, away from the traffic and amongst beautiful Cumbrian flora and fauna.



The cost of its upkeep represents a significant proportion of Parish Council expenditure, but the obvious benefits to the environment and the health and well-being of its users, are our reward.



Eskdale Parish Council

The Council has been undertaking the planting of wild flower seeds and spring bulbs throughout the Parish as part of the plan to encourage wildlife. The defib located within the village had been out of action and was no longer fit for purpose. The local campsite at Fisherground donated the money for the Parish Council to enable to purchase a replacement defib which is currently being installed.

How Town & Parish Councils are making a difference

Crosby Ravensworth Parish Council

Crosby Ravensworth Parish Council (CRPC) was bequeathed a property from a well-loved and respected member of our community with the wish that it should be offered for rental to a 'local, worthy family'.

After a survey to establish the extent of work required to bring the house up to current standards, the PC accepted the bequest. Obtaining the quotes for the work was a challenge and we added a contingency amount to our request for loan funding to cover inflation costs of work and materials.

In January 2022 we applied via CALC to the Public Works Loan Board (PLWB) for a £180,000 loan to cover all the refurbishment costs. We had been informed that this could take a few weeks, but after 5 months and with regular assistance from CALC, we contacted our MP for further impetus. By the time we received the loan in June 2022 the interest rate had increased which has resulted in setting a slightly higher rent than originally forecast. However, the interest rate is fixed for the entire span of the loan and so the repayments to the PWLB will remain unchanged for the full term. The rental income will cover the loan with a small amount remaining to build up a maintenance fund. The building work started in June 2022. The house needed extensive renovation so initial works saw the property stripped back to its shell. We determined that the old property should be economic for the PC to maintain and for a tenant to afford, while retaining its character. So it has an Air Source Heat Pump with underfloor heating to ground and first floors, extra insulation and double glazing in addition to the existing solar panels. Local trades people were employed as much as possible and volunteers from the village undertook some unskilled jobs, such as concrete and gravel barrowing along with garden clearance and planting.

When the refurbishment was nearly complete, we held an Open Day for members of the community to look around and see how their PC had spent the loan. The feedback has been positive.

In order to ensure independence, the property rental was arranged by an estate agent. All the applications were scored according to the developed CRPC Housing Allocation Policy which identified the qualifying criteria, such as property suitability and local connections. It has been a major project for CRPC, but it has provided an affordable home to a family who can enjoy and contribute to the village.



District Associations Activities

Each of the District Associations works differently with some arranging 'three tier' meetings, meaning representatives of the local borough or district council and county council are present, whilst others ask their councils what events they would like to see delivered, they then work with their principal authorities or other partners to hold events that they know are of interest to their councils.

CALC host regular forums and events for District Associations' members. These are delivered area specifically or across several areas, depending on the topic and its relevance to members.

Training

CALC developmental sessions for Councillors and Clerks have been really successful year. We have held 77 courses, which 365 delegates comprising clerks and councillors attended.

Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)

The Certificate in Local Council Administration is a foundation qualification for clerks. Having a CiLCA-qualified clerk should be the aim of all councils, as it gives confidence that you are receiving up to date, accurate advice. With two thirds of your council members elected (not co-opted) and your clerk CiLCA-qualified, your council becomes eligible for the General Power of Competence, which widely expands your powers to achieve things for the community. In the last year Rachael Kelly has become qualified as a CiLCA trainer and our course has been revamped to work virtually. The course provides guidance on the layout of your portfolio, which templates to use and guidance on where to access the legislation.

We have had a fantastic year for CiLCA passes, and the following feedback has been received:

Nick Philips (parish clerk to Matterdale, Kirkoswald, Haytom & St Cuthberts Without Parish Councils)

My Parish Councils had agreed that they wanted me to undertake the CiLCA qualification partly so that I would have some substantive nationally recognised training and development and also so that they would have a qualified clerk and be able to adopt the General Power of Competence if they wished to do so. Having moved from education to clerking there were some crossovers in the ways of working but subject specific training would benefit.

As part of the process I enrolled on a training and support programme run by CALC which provided online sessions for each of the units that you study as part of the CiLCA qualification. The support was invaluable and I found that annotating the paper based handouts during each training session allowed me to use the tips that I had gleaned from both the trainer and other participants when I came to carry out the assessed tasks required. This was especially useful for me as I completed the first unit and then left a fairly long gap before completing the other units and so I had detailed notes to look at, I also joined a Facebook support group.

The trainer also set up a WhatsApp group for all of the participants in the cohort so that we could offer mutual support and help for anyone that was stuck on a Learning Objective or was just having a meltdown looking at what was asked and overthinking the requirement. The support from this, the trainer and the Facebook group was much needed at times.

CALC working for you and celebrating your success

My top pieces of advice would be:

Make notes at the training sessions, you don't realise until much later how important some of the throw away comments might be.

Make sure you have a group of people you can ask if something you are doing is on the right lines or how they approached a task.

Some of the hardest sounding learning objectives were actually the most straightforward and vice versa.

Vivien Little (Clerk to Keswick Town Council)

When I started at Keswick Town Council a little over two years, I had worked in local government for the best part of ten years, but not in a parish council environment. While a lot of what I'd done previously was transferable to the new job, there was a lot that was completely new to me, such as the delights of AGAR and the land we hold in Trust. Add to that the fact I had a baptism of fire with staff illness, and that is where going through CiLCA came in and helped me.

I signed up for CiLCA through CALC early on, and soon began work on it, with the training sessions being held every couple of months for a couple of hours in the evening. Going through each unit in turn gave me the confidence to look at each learning objective in the course, and link it into something I had done at the Council, or something that we needed to do.

Now that I have passed CiLCA, it has certainly helped to improve my confidence in dealing with any awkward situation which is thrown at me (and let's face it, we get plenty of those on a day to day basis). The work which was done as part of the portfolio has been able to feed into the work at the Council, for instance, making sure that all our legal documentation is up to date, but also producing documents like a community engagement strategy which was later adopted by Council, and has been used to improve our communications with the general public.

Lynn Bell (Pennington Parish Council)

I completed the CiLCA training through CALC - the first sessions being before enrolling on the actual CiLCA qualification. This was invaluable as it not only provided information needed to adequately complete each unit, but also provided advice on how to set out the assignments and properly prepared me for what to expect. In some parts it helped me to plan and stick to timescales for completing each unit and I wholeheartedly believe that the training helped me to complete and pass the qualification within 6 months with no referrals. The support from [Rachael] and other Clerks doing the training was amazing and offered so much insight into how other Council's work and therefore helping to put in place actions/ procedures not currently implemented by our Council.

The course was extensive but extremely informative, helpful and interesting however, I would absolutely not consider doing the course without doing the training, I cannot recommend it enough.

Stephanie Kirkby (Deputy Clerk Prudhoe Town Council)

I am the Deputy Clerk at Prudhoe Town Council in Northumberland. In Autumn last year (2022) I was keen to start my CiLCA qualification, however no training courses were available through Northumberland Association of Local Councils. I therefore reached out to Cumbria Association of Local Councils after spotting their online CiLCA Clerk training course, which looked exactly like what I needed.

Starting in September 2022, the sessions have been incredibly helpful in my CiLCA journey, guiding me through each module step-by-step. Working in Northumberland and not at a council in Cumbria was not an issue as each session covered topics and scenarios covering both town and parish councils in general, with breakout sections in each session allowing further

CALC working for you and celebrating your success

discussions and useful comparisons between my council and other participants in Cumbria. In terms of mentoring, Rachael has been a great mentor throughout, and was always on hand via email to review drafts, help decipher feedback and offer encouragement.

I believe the quality of the course and mentoring has been reflected in passing my CiLCA in July with exemplary in all five Units! The benefits to my council have been clear from the start, and as part of the CiLCA process I have been reviewing and updating all of our policies, as well as introducing new policies and ways of working. This has led to me feeling more confident in my role as an effective and knowledgeable Deputy Clerk. I have already recommended the training to our current Clerk, who is due to start CiLCA this year, so the benefits to the council will keep coming!

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CALC working with partners

CALC's Chief Officer attends the following meetings to ensure that each group is aware of the needs of the parish and town council sector:

- **Cumbria Chief Executives** - strategic, county-wide issues.
- **The Electoral Administrators Cumbria group** - includes election officers from all areas who discuss the legal / procedural requirements for elections, including changes being driven by LGR.
- **NALC County Officers** - around 43 county officers join NALC legal team to discuss issues in their areas.
- **Associations of local Councils Chief Officers Forums** - the Chief Officers of all the Associations of Local Councils meet every quarter to agree key priorities to be taken to NALC and central government.
- **Lake District National Park Partnership Forum** - Over 25 partner organisations meet quarterly to discuss progress on the Management Plan and other impacts on the Lake District such as climate change.
- **Annual Review meetings** - with Chief Executive Officers in each District / Borough Council, the County Council and representatives from the new Shadow Unitary Authorities.

CALC Executive members also attend meetings with partner organisations.

- **Northern Associations of Local Councils**
- **National Association of Local Councils National Assembly**
- **Healthy Weight Partnership**
- **GDF - Allerdale, Mid Copeland, South Copeland**
- **Lake District National Park**
- **St Cuthberts Garden Village, Carlisle**
- **Cumbria Leaders Board**

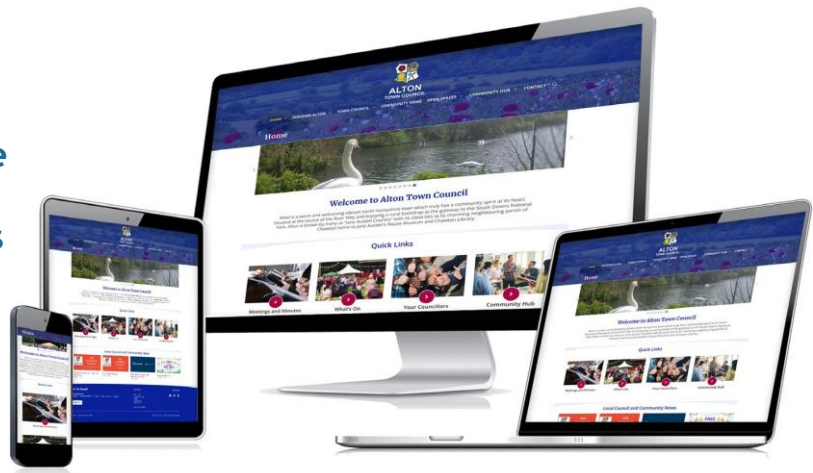
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<p>The Clerk Lichfield City Council </p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p>"I would highly recommend Vision ICT to any parish or town council looking for a new website. They are a professional and reliable company who provide excellent customer service."</p>	<p>The Clerk Horton in Ribblesdale Parish Council </p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p>"Vision ICT helped us create a website that is both visually appealing and easy to use. We are very happy with the service we received."</p>	<p>The Clerk Newland Parish Council </p> <p>★★★★★</p> <p>"Vision ICT were a pleasure to work with. They were very helpful and understanding, and they always went the extra mile to make sure we were happy with our website."</p>
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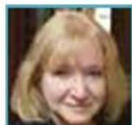
Membership of CALC

- ✓ Timely advice on any aspect of local council work, by email or by phone if it is urgent.
- ✓ A bi-monthly newsletter, emailed to councils and councillors, providing information and guidance on current issues relevant to local councils.
- ✓ The provision of a range of publications, both digital and hard copy, on local council work.
- ✓ A CALC website to provide information about all parishes to the general public, as well as downloadable information and guidance for exclusive use by local councils (clerks and councillors).
- ✓ Providing guidance and toolkits for councils to use on topics such as Climate Change
- ✓ An annual training programme.
- ✓ Access to conferences on topics of interest to parish councils working in partnership with principal authorities.
- ✓ Access to Specialist Financial and Legal advice specific to your needs through Service Level Agreements that CALC finances.
- ✓ A contact and bridge between Principal Authorities and Town and Parish Councils.

Membership of NALC

- ✓ Specialist legal advice on complex generic issues.
- ✓ Bulletins on legal issues, new government policies and other matters.
- ✓ Access to the NALC website.
- ✓ Promoting government support for the parish tier of local government.
- ✓ Lobbying government for changes to assist the work of local councils.
- ✓ Responding to a large number of consultations from government and government agencies on policies and proposals that affect local councils.
- ✓ Being the national 'voice' of local councils in the media, in government and amongst opposition political parties.

CALC Staff



Sonia Hutchinson

Chief Officer



Rachael Kelly

Town & Parish Development Officer



Chris Shaw

Parish Support Officer for Allerdale & Copeland District Associations
(retired 31st March 2023)



Lindsay Nicholson

Parish Support Officer for Carlisle and Eden District Associations until 31st March 2023. (From 1st April 2024 Parish Support Officer and Resilience Westmorland and Furness)



Kate Grove

Project Officer Resilience and Parish Support Officer South Lakeland until 31st March 2023. ((From 1st April 2024 Parish Support Officer and Resilience Cumberland)



Karen Wood

Freelance administrator

CALC Honorary Members

President: David Graham MBE (resigned February 2023)

Hon. Treasurer: Julie Hartley

CALC Executive Committee



Cllr Mary Bradley
Executive Committee Chairperson (from December 2022)
Allerdale District Association Chairperson



Cllr David Wilson
Allerdale District Association Vice Chairman



Cllr Mike Cumming
Barrow District Association Chairman

Barrow District Association Vice Chair position vacant in 2022 / 2023



Cllr Mike Higginbotham
Carlisle District Association Chairman



Cllr Bryan Craig
Executive Committee Vice-Chairman (until December 2022)
Carlisle District Association Vice-Chairman



Cllr Andy Pratt
Copeland District Association Chairman



Cllr Doug Sim
Copeland District Association Vice-Chairman



Cllr Sue Castle-Clarke
Executive Committee Chairperson (until December 2022)
Eden District Association Chairperson



Cllr Jane Tea
Executive Committee Vice-Chairman (from December 2022)
Eden District Association Vice-Chairperson



Cllr Leith Hallatsch
South Lakeland District Association Chairman



Cllr Peter Smillie
South Lakeland District Association Vice-Chairman (until March 2023)

Cllr Mark Kidd

Directly elected to Executive Committee

Cllr Jonathan Davies

Directly elected to Executive Committee (until October 2022)

Cllr Bev Pink

Directly elected to Executive Committee

Year end accounts

CUMBRIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	2023		2022	
	£		£	
RECEIPTS				
Affiliation Fees		62,356		58,964
Sale of Publications		116		271
Sale of Local Councils Review		-		238
Local Authority Grants		46,885		47,885
Training		15,305		8,313
Deposit Account Interest		934		143
Sundry Income/Conference		650		-
CCC Grant Resilience Project		-		37,000
Radioactive Waste Management		-		1,488
		<u>126,246</u>		<u>154,302</u>
Balances at 1 April 2022				
Deposit Account		32,855		32,851
Current Account		87,070		40,578
Cumberland Building Society		52,758	172,683	52,618
		<u>172,683</u>		<u>126,047</u>
		<u>298,929</u>		<u>280,349</u>
PAYMENTS				
NALC - Affiliation Fees		21,831		21,761
Publications		501		309
NALC Local Council Review		-		154
Printing and Stationery		14		565
Members Expenses		218		-
Meetings		1,024		1,279
Bank Charges		415		105
CALC salaries		71,703		63,626
Project Officer salary and oncosts		19,141		-
Grant Resilience Project expenses		7,123		-
Pension Payments		2,182		1,440
Accountancy Fees		828		798
Honoraria		500		500
Training		9,115		4,608
Sundries		40		40
Insurance		1,386		330
Fingertips - Agency costs		9,452		8,502
Conference		-		96
Contingency		274		-
Postage/Phone		98		91
Recruitment		-		1,785
Affiliation fees returned		147		-
Subscriptions		-		600
Zoom Accounts		-		124
Radioactive Waste Management		-		953
CPCA		25		-
		<u>146,017</u>		<u>107,666</u>
Balances at 31 March 2023				
Deposit Account		32,973		32,855
Current Account		66,371		87,070
Cumberland Building Society		53,568	152,912	52,758
		<u>152,912</u>		<u>172,683</u>
		<u>298,929</u>		<u>280,349</u>

We certify that the above Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2023 is correct and in accordance with the best of your information given to us and as shown by the books.

Saint & Co
Chartered Accountants
Unit 7b
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Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) is run by local councils for the benefit of local councils. It assists local councils in their day-to-day work and represents their interests

CALC's work is paid for by the subscriptions of its member councils, together with grants from the principal authorities of Cumbria and the Lake District National Park Authority



CALC would also like to thank the sponsors of the CALC AGM 2023 & the CALC Annual Review 2023

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Cumbria Association of Local Councils

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