

Troutbeck Village Association

Chairman's Report for 2006 – 2007

Establishment of the Association

The need for a Troutbeck Village Association was discussed at a public open meeting held in the Institute in February 2006. Shortly after this a Committee was formed and the aims and workings of the Village Association (ie. its Constitution) were agreed. The Village Association Committee currently comprises 12 members, and has met seven times during its first year.

The Committee

The present members of the Committee are as follows:

Name

Harry Allen (Parish Councillor)
Tony Ashton (Chairman)
Katharine Brown
Sue Black
Peter Fothergill (PCC representative)
Mike Guy (Social Committee representative)
Rachel Halliday (Institute representative)
Margaret Lewis (Secretary)
Brian Liddell
Emma Rudkin (Treasurer)
Brenda Varley (WI representative)
Roger Westmoreland (Parish Councillor)

Mike Barton was also a member of the Committee until February 2007.

First Year Activities

Our first year has concentrated on addressing the actions identified in the Troutbeck part of the Lakes Parish Plan, since these had been clearly identified by Troutbeck residents in two questionnaires circulated during the preparation of the Plan.

The **creation of a Village Association** was one of the actions identified in the Parish Plan, so after our first meeting we were off to a great start!

The closure of the Garburn track to motorised vehicles by the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) dealt with another action in the Parish Plan - although the Association claims no credit for this. However, motor cycles continued to use the track illegally after its closure. The Association identified and publicised the need and manner in which residents should report further illegal use of the track to the police.

The need for a **footpath along the A592 from Jesus Church to the Queens Hotel** was identified in the Plan. We are pleased to report that both the National Trust, owners of most of the land involved, and the LDNPA are very supportive of this proposal. A budget for the cost of

the work has been prepared and we are told that the creation of this footpath is now a high priority. We await with interest to hear exactly what this means.

The widespread concerns expressed about the continuing development of **Limefitt Park**, its changing character, excessive light output, reduced site screening and excessive entrance signage have taken up a good deal of the Committee's time. The Association have written to and met with the LDNPA, the local management and the new owners of the site. LDNPA tells us that the development of the site is within the existing permission for the site which stipulate the provision of up to 195 'units' within a designated area. Unfortunately the definition of a 'unit' covers a tent, a touring caravan, a static caravan or a lodge. Selling lodges is much more profitable than renting camping pitches so we can expect a gradual change in the character of the site.

Our most recent efforts on this front have been to persuade the owners to undertake **landscaping and tree planting** on and around the site to screen the 'housing estate' like development from the village. We are also attempting to persuade them to direct site lighting downwards, and to use motion or time switches to reduce the **excessive amount of lighting**. The Chief Executive of the company has agreed to look at both these matters.

The Association agreed to help organise **The Troutbeck Garden Trail for 2007**. Under the joint chairmanship of Christopher Poulson and myself plans are well advanced to open some 10 private gardens to the public on the Bank Holiday Monday of 28th May. This event will follow a similar format to the previous two events in 2003 and 2005. Home made teas will be sold in the Institute and a raffle will be held. A garden quiz with prizes is already being sold in Post Office and elsewhere to publicise the event. Proceeds from the event will go to New Holehird, the Institute, Church and the Village Association.

The Institute Committee kindly agreed to the installation of an **Association notice board** on the Institute wall, and through Alf Henderson's skills, the Association now have a notice board through which to publicise matters relevant to Troutbeck. **Information on Troutbeck Events and Useful contacts** have been compiled and are now displayed on the notice board.

Another action, that of improving the **outside lighting at Institute** has been actioned by the Institute.

Frequent calls by Committee members to SLDC and Cumbria Highways have seen some improvement in **road maintenance**. Other general tidying up of the village has been tackled in a number of ways. A new 'lengthsman' scheme which is about to be introduced by SLDC appears to be the most likely way in which we can get action on clearing blocked drains and removing saplings from roadside verges. The Association has produced a list of work we would like to see tackled by the lengthsman once this work starts.

Committee members helped clear fallen trees at the bottom of Greengate.

The Association produced proposals for the **improvement to three village seating areas**. These areas; at the bottom of Robin Lane, at the top of Greengate and at High Green, were termed the Troutbeck Triangles. The owners of the first two triangles, the Institute, are in the process of implementing some of the proposals, whilst a grant is being sought to implement the proposals for the third triangle.

We asked the LDNPA to notify us of **landscape sensitive planning applications** in the valley. This need came from the erection of two mobile phone masts in Applethwaite quarry, both applications for which went completely unpublicised in the village! Unfortunately LDNPA were

unwilling to agree to this request so we are still left relying on residents to notify us of such applications.

A survey of **Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed** was undertaken for the National Park during July and August last year. Action is needed to stop these invasive weeds from spreading throughout the area. We envisage the Association having to tackle the Himalayan Balsam problem in July /August this year by uprooting plants just as they come into flower. We are however hopeful that assistance will be forthcoming from the LDNPA to tackle the much more difficult eradication of Japanese Knotweed.

Representations were made to United Utilities regarding the **unreliable electricity supply**. Work by United Utilities late in 2006 appears to have resolved the problem. We are also investigating whether Troutbeck could be included in an initiative to bury unsightly over-ground electricity supply lines.

The **Electoral Review of South Lakeland** undertaken by South Lakeland District Council proposed that Troutbeck would be moved to Windermere and Bowness for local representation for District Council purposes and whilst continuing to be part of the Lakes Parish (Ambleside, Grasmere, Langdale and Rydal) for Parish Council purposes. The Committee was unanimous that this change and split representation was not in the best interests of Troutbeck and as such made representations to the Boundary Committee, SLDC Executive and publicised the matter both in the Parish Magazine and the Institute. We await the Boundary Committee's decision on this matter.

The Village association sends two representatives to the meetings of the **Lakes Parish Plan Action Group**. This is the group which is responsible for implementing those aspects of the Parish Plans of Ambleside, Grasmere, Langdale, Rydal and Troutbeck which are common to all wards. At the present time this group is concentrating on **community communication, rural recycling, and community transport**. Our representatives continue to represent Troutbeck's interests in these matters.

The present arrangements for **Community Transport** were identified and published in the Institute window. They are now also on the Association Notice board. Further developments are expected in the next few months, and once these are known we will publish the details.

A separate Affordable Housing Action Group has been addressing the need for **affordable housing** within the village and in particular in progressing the development of two, possibly four units, in the old school site. The Village Association has supported this work and may well need to work more closely with them in future.

Finally

It has been an interesting and challenging first year and the Committee feel we have made a good start. We have completed or made good progress on 11 of the 19 actions identified in the Troutbeck part of the Parish Plan. A further 4 of the actions are in hand.

The Association will shortly need to seek member's views on current issues affecting Troutbeck. This will probably be partly done through circulating a new questionnaire. In the meantime, where better to begin this process than through discussions at our first Annual General Meeting.

Tony Ashton
Chairman
Troutbeck Village Association
10th April 2007