



Chairman's Report for 2007–2008

The Association

The Association continues to further its aims of:

- collecting and representing its members' views regarding the character, amenities and environment of Troutbeck village;
- working to improve, preserve and protect the village environment;
- communicating with members on matters of local importance;
- promoting a strong sense of village identity and community spirit.

The Committee

The Village Association Committee currently comprises twelve members, and has met six times during its second year. The present Committee members are:

Brenda Varley (Womens Institute representative)

Brian Liddell

Emma Rudkin (Treasurer)

Geoff Brown (PCC representative)

Harry Allen (Parish Councillor)

Katharine Brown

Margaret Lewis (Secretary)

Rachel Halliday (Institute representative)

Roger Westmoreland (Parish Councillor & Social Committee representative)

Sue Black

Sylvia Waring

Tony Ashton (Chairman)

Sylvia Waring and Geoff Brown joined the Committee in April 2007. The remaining members were present from the formation of the Association in April 2006. Mike Guy and Peter Fothergill retired from the Committee during 2007.

Our Activities

Garburn track

The Association supported the closure of the track to motorised vehicles. During the year we discussed with the National Park Authority (NPA) the need for better signage and stronger gates to deter continued intermittent illegal use. We also republished the manner in which residents should report further illegal use of the track.

The notification in December 2007 of the intention of the NPA to reclassify the track from a public bridleway to a restricted byway would have meant the track would have remained closed to motorised vehicles. However the Trail Riders Association has objected to this and the matter will be passed onto the Planning Inspectorate. Meanwhile, it continues to be a criminal offence to drive a car or ride a motor bike over Garburn, and any incidents should continue to be reported to the NPA contact centre and to the Police.

Limefitt Park

The Association has been monitoring the developments at Limefitt and have during the year reported two breaches of planning to the NPA. In one case involving camping outside the permitted boundary the matter was rectified immediately. The other case involved the construction of a concrete base for the erection of gas tanks outside the camp boundary. This was given retrospective planning permission. We continue to monitor the site.

We have been in regular contact with the site management with our efforts being directed at reducing light output, providing additional tree planting to screen the site and removing the tip in the open land to the North of the camp. We have received assurances that action will be forthcoming on all these matters. However we have become so frustrated over the last two years at the lack of progress on the light pollution front that we have reported this wide spread nuisance to SLDC's Environmental Protection Team.

Troutbeck Garden Trail

The Association organised the 2007 Trail. Previous Garden Trails in 2003 and 2005 were organised by individuals but it was thought appropriate that the Association should carry the event forward. Under the joint chairmanship of Christopher Poulson and myself the event was held on the Bank Holiday Monday in May. Twelve private

gardens were opened to the public, home-made teas were sold in the Institute and a raffle was held. A garden quiz with prizes was also organised to raise funds and publicise the event. The event made a profit of £4000, which was distributed between the Institute, Church, New Holehird and the Village Association.

New A592 Footpath

The Association continues to promote the need for a footpath along the A592 from Jesus Church to the Queens Hotel. This path has been recognised in the Cumbria Rights of Way Improvement Plan and CCC have also acknowledged the need. The Association continues to press LDNPA, CCC and our MP for action on this matter.

Highways and Byways

A number of letters and calls by Committee members to CCC, SLDC and the Parish Council have seen some improvement in road maintenance. The removal of saplings on the A592, the more frequent road sweeping and drain clearance and the filling of pot holes are the likely results of these efforts.

We continue to keep abreast of the unfolding saga on the introduction of a new "Lengthsman" scheme (in which Council staff would undertake minor work on roads and verges), subsequently replaced by a Parish Council "Handyman Scheme" which might possibly now be replaced by the CCC's "Highway Stewards". The Association maintains a list of the work we would like to see tackled and continues to present this to the appropriate organisation.

We have also written requesting signage for the sharp bend by the entrance to Poole Bank Farm and for warning notices to be placed at the ends of Guy Lane to deter commercial vehicles from using the narrow lane which has no passing places and a blind corner along its length.

Last year 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 the Association has committed to improving and maintaining the third.

Invasive Weeds

The survey of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed we undertook in the Parish in 2006 on behalf of the NPA was a prelude to a campaign to eradicate these invasive weeds. During July and August last year the Association began tackling the Himalayan Balsam problem by uprooting plants before they came into flower. We also received assistance to spray the areas of Japanese Knotweed within the Parish. Similar pulling and spraying is planned for this coming year and the Association will be calling for volunteers to help.

Village Web Site

Work has begun on creating a Village Association web site, which will enable all those living within the village and valley to share information. The site www.troutbeck.org is still being built and the Association would welcome ideas and material.

Low Fold Cottage

Discussions have been held with the Holehird Trust (administered by CCC) concerning the long standing vacant cottage. We continue to be advised that a dispute with the adjoining property is still outstanding and that the cottage must remain unoccupied until the matter is resolved.

Wild Flower Talk

A talk on Troutbeck's Wild Flowers was given by Janet Ashton in October. This was very well attended and well received and was followed by wine and nibbles which provided a pleasant end to an enjoyable and informative evening.

Court Syke Barn & Smithy

The Association contacted the NPA about the collapse of the roof on this historic building and we are pleased to report that they traced the owner who has now completed remedial work.

Post Office Closure

The Association made representations against the closure of the Post Office.

Cumbria in Bloom

The Association were unaware that the village had been entered into the 2007 competition and it therefore came as a surprise when we were asked to provide someone to accompany the judge and tour the village. We explained that few if any residents were aware of the

event and therefore declined. We have since made soundings and can find little interest or commitment in entering the event in 2008.

Recycling

Several committee members attended various road shows and presentations to establish the extent to which Troutbeck residents would benefit from the proposed changes.

Noticeboard

Details on Troutbeck events and useful contacts continue to be maintained and displayed on the Association Notice board.

Electoral Review

The Electoral Review undertaken by SLDC proposed that Troutbeck would be moved to Windermere and Bowness for representation for District Council purposes, 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. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful and Troutbeck now finds itself to be one of the very few parishes in Cumbria with this split geographic representation.

Finally

The Association intended to seek member's views on current issues affecting Troutbeck during the year. However Committee members have found no shortage of issues affecting Troutbeck and as such we felt there was no need for a formal questionnaire. Instead we intend to seek residents' views through this and future meetings, through our new web site and of course through personal contacts. And of course residents are always welcome to contact any members of the committee.

In this way we will be fully aware of residents concerns and look forward to another year of pursuing the Association's aims.

Tony Ashton
Chairman
Troutbeck Village Association
21st April 2008