



## **Annual General Meeting**

**11<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

### **AGENDA**

- 1 Welcome & Introductions
- 2 Chairman's Report
- 3 Treasurer's Report
- 4 Election of Committee members
- 5 Members' Feedback and Ideas
- 6 Any Other Business
- 7 Close

# **Chairman's Report for 2008–2009**

## **Introduction**

The Village Association Committee currently comprises the following twelve members:

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)

The Committee has met on six occasions during the year. There have been no changes to the Committee since the last Annual General Meeting.

Since the formation of the Village Association (VA) the Committee has devised a number of principles to help our work, and I think it would be useful to explain some of these to provide a greater understanding of how we work.

First and foremost the Committee must reach a consensus before taking action. We feel that unless we are in complete agreement on a particular issue then it is very unlikely to be broadly acceptable to residents. We feel this together with our differing backgrounds aids our aim of properly "representing members' views regarding the character, amenities and environment of Troutbeck".

This idea of reaching a consensus is in fact why the Association has never been actively involved in the matter of affordable housing. In the past this has been a very divisive issue and we feel the Committee could in no way attempt to represent the many and varied views on this subject. Nevertheless, the Committee is regularly briefed by Geoff Brown on the activities of the Lakes Affordable Housing Group.

Last year the Committee agreed to publish on the VA notice board details of all planning applications concerning Troutbeck as soon as they become available from the Parish Council agendas. The Committee also agreed that the VA should not attempt to take any particular stance on such applications as this was considered a matter for individual residents.

The Committee has also agreed that where the Committee becomes aware of possible planning breaches the VA will in all cases report these to the National Park Authority (NPA). Here we feel we are "working to improve, preserve and protect the village environment" albeit leaving it to the NPA to settle or arbitrate on such matters.

I hope this helps in understanding how we are working on matters which can on occasions be difficult and contentious.

## **Our Activities**

### **Highways and Byways**

Margaret Lewis has been maintaining a list of work for the Parish and Cumbria Highways Stewards and liaising with various members of Cumbria Highways (CH), SLDC, NPA and the Parish Council on matters such as replacement salt bins, blocked drains, over hanging branches, saplings and cleaning roads and road signs.

Although we have seen an improvement in road maintenance we continue to progress outstanding matters. However, we urge residents to make use of the Highways hot line number to report new problems and only inform the VA (via the web site or by contacting a Committee member) if a satisfactory response is not received.

During the year we persuaded CH to install new signage:

- at the sharp corner by the entrance to Poole Bank Farm, following reports of near misses and occasional unexpected visits to the farm;
- and at both ends of Guy Lane warning that it is not suitable for heavy vehicles or as a "sat. nav." route. This followed a number of large vehicles becoming stuck on the narrow lane. Unfortunately the Guy Lane signs were illegally defaced and then removed. CH are at present refusing to install replacements.

The VA also reported the Mortal Man signage at the end of Guy Lane to the NPA for a breach of planning. The NPA wrote to the Mortal Man management requesting removal of the illegal notices. Whilst these

signs have since been removed we suspect this is not from any action on the part of the NPA.

Last year the VA agreed to assume responsibility for the maintenance of the grassy triangle at High Green. The new owners of High Green House have now agreed take over the future maintenance of the area.

### **Garburn Track & Dubbs Road**

We have been in discussions with NPA with regard to:

- improving signage on access rights and restrictions;
- resurfacing Dubbs Road;
- repairing the badly eroded sections of the Garburn Track; and
- removing an abandoned vehicle.

We can report that progress has been made on most of these items.

### **Community Travel Plans for Troutbeck & Troutbeck Bridge**

An initiative by the County's Area Engineer to identify travel and transport issues and prioritise their solutions through public meetings was undertaken for Troutbeck and Troutbeck Bridge in January and February this year. Attendance at the meetings was disappointing. The outcome was that the top priorities were all associated with Troutbeck Bridge, with the exception of the footpath at the side of the A592 between the Church and the Queens Head, which finished second on the agreed list of priorities. There was no commitment forthcoming on the likely timing of this work.

### **Woodlands and Invasive Weeds**

Last Summer Katharine Brown worked with a professional spraying company on a second spraying of the remaining areas of Japanese Knotweed. She also organised some additional work to clear the remaining areas of Himalayan Balsam, but this was difficult due to the adverse weather. These initiatives in the last two years have seen a considerable reduction in these invasive weeds.

Katharine has also been representing the VA on the 'Rothay Valley Sustainable Environment Group'. This is the group which provided the funds for the spraying in Troutbeck and which continues to champion the removal of invasive weeds across the Lakes Parish.

Katharine has also been involved with other volunteers in assisting the National Trust in planting oak and ash trees in Whiteside plantation. She is also involved with the Woodland Trust in an initiative for young people.

## **Village Web Site** [www.troutbeck.org](http://www.troutbeck.org)

The Village Web site was launched in November last year. The site, designed and developed by Brian Liddell, is primarily intended for residents not visitors and enables all those living within the village and valley to share information. Whilst we appreciate that there are many residents who do not have access to the internet we feel this is sound basis upon which to build a lasting source of community information. The site also allows users to provide feedback and ideas to the VA (anonymously if required).

## **Memories of Troutbeck**

In March the VA held an afternoon social meeting in the Institute in which old photographs, books, pictures and postcards were collected and displayed. Refreshments were provided and the occasion provided a informative and enjoyable occasion for over 80 attendees.

## **Cumbria in Bloom**

The Association has again been asked to take part in Cumbria in Bloom and have again declined through lack of interest in the village.

## **Troutbeck Garden Trail**

The Association is again organising this years Trail and has held several quite separate well attended planning meetings. The event this year will be held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May from 11:30am to 5:00pm. and is being advertised throughout the area.

Once again the event involves twelve private gardens opening to the public. The day will include home-made teas in the Institute, a raffle, plant and garden produce sales outside the Institute, heritage information along the trail and a children's competition. A garden quiz with prizes has been produced and is being sold to raise funds and publicise the event. The proceeds from the event will be distributed between the Institute, Jesus Church, First Responders and the VA

## **Taylor Review**

The Taylor Report published in July 2008 made recommendations on planning policy for rural areas and affordable housing. The report was commissioned by Gordon Brown and written by Liberal Democrat MP Matthew Taylor. Whilst the report made many sensible recommendations, one involved placing restrictions on the sale of permanent homes in areas where there was a need for affordable housing. This caused concern to a number of residents which was further heightened by the active support of our M.P. and by a reference in a National newspaper to Troutbeck as being an example of such an area.

The VA were kept briefed on the extensive canvassing undertaken by a resident, Glynn Bromley. We have since learned that the contentious recommendation has now been dropped by the Government.

### **Electoral Review**

The Electoral Review undertaken by SLDC resulted in Troutbeck being moved to Windermere and Bowness for representation for District Council purposes. Following this move the VA have begun briefing Jo Stephenson, our new District Councillor, on matters of concern to Troutbeck.

### **Limefitt Park**

Last but by no means least! The VA continues to pursue our main aims of:

- reducing the light pollution;
  - achieving tree planting both within and to the West of the site to screen the site;
  - resisting any expansion of the site;
  - and since January this year, understanding the purpose, impact and absence of consultation associated with the extensive tree planting.
- Let me deal with each of these in turn.

Limefitt Light Pollution: Some reduction in light output had been achieved last year, following a commitment from the previous management. However we were still unhappy with the situation and we therefore reported the matter to SLDC's Environmental Protection Team. The team visited the site and the village at 10:30pm on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008 and measured the light output. Unfortunately SLDC found that no "statutory nuisance" was being caused and could therefore not act under the 'Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act'. More recently we have met with the new Chief Executive of South Lakeland Parks and have reiterated our concerns. We also discussed the new high-level lighting which has been installed to support the new caravans. We have yet to receive any commitments from the new owners of the site.

Site screening: Whilst we obtained commitment from the previous management for some tree planting to screen the site none has been forthcoming. Again in the recent meeting with the new management we reiterated our concerns and again wait their response on this matter.

Site Expansion: The VA has been monitoring recent developments at Limefitt and in March this year we again reported multiple breaches of

planning to the NPA, viz., extending over their planning boundary, installing new high-level lights without permission and levelling a large area for the lodge expansion. We are awaiting feedback from the NPA on these matters.

Recent Tree Planting: Since January this year phone calls, emails, letters and meetings with the Forestry Commission (FC), NPA and Limefitt's agent for the work we have established the following:

- planning permission was not required for the planting;
- the work was undertaken under English Woodland Grant Scheme (No. 17729), in which the work covering 28 Hectares will receive a total grant of £75,411 over seven years;
- both the FC and the NPA have been made aware that the VA believe they have both failed the local community in not undertaking any form of public consultation, in not undertaking a full Environmental Impact Assessment and in not considering the site as a whole in both determining the acceptability of the planting or in awarding the grant;
- letters from both the FC and NPA have detailed their intention to change their procedures in future and promised cooperation with the VA when considering future tree work on the site.

For our part we are trying to ensure that future tree work on site includes significant screening for the village and protects the existing mature trees on the site.

## **Finally**

The Association welcomes all feedback and member's views on current issues affecting Troutbeck. We intend to seek residents' views through the AGM but always welcome feedback either through our web site or of course through personal contacts with Committee members.

Finally I would like to express my thanks for all the help and support I have received from Committee members and I welcome their ongoing commitment in the coming year.

Tony Ashton  
Chairman  
Troutbeck Village Association  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2009

## **Treasurer's Report For the Year Ended 31 March 2009**

<b>Receipts &amp; Payments Account</b>		<b>£</b>
Receipts		
Donations (from 'Memories of Troutbeck')		<b>52.08</b>
Payments		
2008 AGM Expenses		<b>93.49</b>
Cost of Meeting Rooms 2007-08		<b>100.00</b>
Cost of Meeting Rooms 2008-09		<b>90.00</b>
Web site hosting		<b>50.19</b>
Cost of 'Memories of Troutbeck'		<b>55.44</b>
Surplus (loss) for the year		<b>(337.04)</b>

### **Statement of Assets & Liabilities**

Cash Funds		
Bank Account balance as at 31 March 2008		<b>1642.92</b>
Surplus (loss) for the year		<b>(337.04)</b>
Bank Account balance as at 31 March 2009		<b>1305.88</b>
Liabilities		
Cost of Garden Trail Public Insurance		<b>150.15</b>

Emma Rudkin  
Treasurer  
Troutbeck Village Association  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2009