

Cockermouth & District Civic Trust Newsletter

President: The Lord Egremont, Chairman: Phil Campbell

Secretary: John Dent, Treasurer: Ian Dodsworth

Issue no 136, September 2017 - **50th ANNIVERSARY YEAR**



A shorter update newsletter this time as it does not seem that long since our last newsletter in July. Apart from the updates, the main objectives of this newsletter is to tell you about our forthcoming lecture programme and to remind you that it is time to renew your subscriptions for the 2017/18 season. Please do so as your membership matters. As a group we feel that we do have a positive influence on our town and the larger our membership, the stronger our voice is. Equally, we need new members and our best recruiters are yourselves.

Subscription Renewal

The subscription renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter. The subscription rate is unchanged from last year.

50th Anniversary Members Meeting

Our first meeting of the 2017/18 season will be on Wednesday 4th October at the earlier time of **7pm** at the Friends Meeting House. The meeting will open with a short concert by Katie Gentry. Katie's music is vocal and acoustic guitar and she writes her own songs. She has said that she will not charge for her performance but will accept donations for Cockermouth Mountain Rescue. We will give a Civic Trust donation, and there will also be a collection box. After the concert, we will have light refreshments including the 50th Anniversary Cake. There will then be a presentation led by Brian Coley comparing photographs of Cockermouth around 50 years ago with today. After the Civic Trust was first formed, some members undertook a photographic survey of Cockermouth buildings & Brian has been taking current photos from the same locations.

Lecture Season

Following on from our 50th anniversary meeting, the rest of the lecture programme is shown below. All these lectures will be on the evening of the first Wednesday of the month at the Friends Meeting House, 7.30pm.

Nov 1 st	Rachel Painter	Putting the (Wordsworth) House to bed
Dec 6 th	Ros Earthy	Christmas in Cumberland (preceded by AGM)
Feb 7 th	Steve Bailey	Past & modern techniques in (Cockermouth) mountain rescue
Mar 7 th	Diane Hewitt	Wellington Farm – have we diversified?
Apr 18 th	Joe Broomfield	The Role of the (Cockermouth) Town Manager

These lectures are on the evening of the first Wednesday of the month at the Friends Meeting House, 7.30pm., EXCEPT for the last lecture which is delayed by 2 weeks due to Easter.

Annual Trip, Wednesday 6th September



We had a grand day out in Gateshead & Newcastle. First a tour of the Sage facilities. A fascinating building & we learnt a lot. Did you know for example that the main building structure is completely separate from the outer 'canopy' & was built first? Then an amble on a circular walk from the Sage with one of 2 guides, crossing the river, along the Quayside & back over the Millennium Bridge to finish at the Baltic Gallery.

Conservation Areas, 50th Anniversary.

We have now distributed the Conservation Area booklets to virtually all of the properties within the Cockermouth & Papcastle Conservation Areas. If any members living outside of the Conservation Area would like a copy, please ask – we will bring some along to the 50th Anniversary Meeting on 4th October.

We also held the Conservation Area Exhibition as part of Heritage Open Days on Saturday 9th September. For the exhibition, we had prepared self guided walking tours of both Conservation Areas. Again, if you didn't get a copy & would like one, please ask.

Still to do is to erect the information boards about our Conservation Areas in Kings Arms Lane and the Library. These have been ordered & are due to be put up in October.

We have put significant effort into this project to raise the profile of our Conservation Areas during this year marking the 50th anniversary of the very first Conservation Area in the UK. We hope that this has been worthwhile and the extra attention will benefit the continuity of our heritage for generations to come.

Local Heritage Listing

As reported in the July newsletter, it looks as though we have managed to overcome the deadlock that we have had with Allerdale BC over the last year, i.e. the Council had decided not to consider any nomination for local listing within an existing Conservation Area. A revised proposal was put to Council at their September meeting, which we understand was agreed. So we are now looking forward to implementation of the process.

'Cockermouth Vision'

You will be well aware that we have failed to convince the Town Council of the need to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for Cockermouth. Reluctantly, we have decided that it is not worth our time & effort proceeding any further with it for the time being at least.

However, at our meeting with Allerdale BC on Local Heritage Listing, they proposed that if the community were to produce a document over the next couple of years summarising the community's 'vision' for Cockermouth, Allerdale BC would take this into account when producing the next revision of the Allerdale Plan. We and the 'Neighbourhood Plan Group' have decided that this is an objective well worth pursuing. Clearly if community views can be assimilated into the Local Plan, this is as good as or better than being in a Neighbourhood Plan. However, we have to recognise that there are no guarantees on any specific aspects of the 'Vision' being taken forward into the Local Plan.

There are a few advantages in producing such a 'vision' document rather than a formal Neighbourhood Plan. These include,

- Less constraint on the scope of the document itself or its compliance with the current Local Plan.
- We don't have to worry about ensuring that the document cannot be subject to legal challenge
- No formal requirements for consultation although it will be advantageous to seek wide community input.
- The document can be produced independently of the Town Council, although individual Councillor's 'visions' can obviously be input.

Although clearly a formally agreed Neighbourhood Plan would be a more powerful document for our Town.

The Neighbourhood Plan Group have therefore decided to regroup as 'Cockermouth Vision' and have held their

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first 2 meetings. This group is intended to have a wider membership than the Civic Trust, but is supported by ourselves. They clearly would like new members so if you are at all interested, please contact Ros Earthy, (822875, biblinros@yahoo.co.uk).

Heritage Open Days

There were 9 events on our activity list this year including our 'flagship' event, the Cockermouth & Papcastle Conservation Area exhibition at the URC, which was opened by the Mayor of Cockermouth Town Council, Alun Tyson.

Alun Tyson with Jules Brown from the North of England Civic Trust, & Phil Campbell



Trees & Weeds

The biggest issue that our members and members of the public have raised with us this year are trees and weeds in Main Street & Market Place. Firstly the trees were hacked rather than pruned and in the wrong season. Then branches have been allowed to grow on the low area of the trunks. Weeds have been allowed to grow round the trees bases. On Main Street, the weeds will disrupt the membrane that has been put in round the tree bases to allow drainage & ventilation.

In Market Place, a couple of the businesses have weeded round the closest trees to their properties & put in some summer planting. Inspired, a few of our members spent a few hours weeding round the other 4 trees not surrounded by the seats. However, without proper management, the weeds are soon returning, detracting from the ambiance of this area of town. In addition, we haven't been able to get at the weeds round the trees with seats.

We have been in touch with Allerdale BC about these issues & hopefully something will happen. However, this is primarily a County Council responsibility so after advice, we have lodged formal complaints on the County Council web site. This has been registered as a single complaint. Multiple complaints attract more attention, so if you feel the same way as we do, please consider registering your own.

Ian Dodsworth

Ian has decided to resign both as Treasurer and as a committee member as from the AGM in December. Ian has served us well over many years & I would like to record our thanks from the Committee and the membership as a whole.

Phil Campbell, Chairman