

Cockermouth & District Civic Trust Newsletter



President: The Lord Egremont, Chairman: Phil Campbell
Secretary: John Dent, Treasurer: Elizabeth Silman
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Spring is almost upon us after a late sting in the tail of Winter, and we are thinking about our Spring and Summer activities. In particular, our plans for this year's lunch and this year's outing are in place and its time to put them in your diary and order your tickets. Also there are a number of other activities that its timely to update you on, from 'Cockermouth Vision' to a planning application for an out of town B&M Store. The big story though is that we should soon have a Local Heritage List for Cockermouth and District formally registered with Allerdale BC.

Local Heritage List

The first meeting of the Allerdale Local Heritage List Panel met on March 9th to consider nominations put forward by ourselves for Cockermouth and District. The panel was chaired by the Deputy Leader of Allerdale BC, Mark Fryer, & Helen Brownlie, Conservation Officer, Allan Kennon for Cockermouth Town Council and Duncan Keeler for Cockermouth Civic Trust attended. 15 of our nominations were accepted, subject only to formal ratification within Allerdale BC. A single nomination was rejected – the Market Place historical mosaics on the basis that these are the sole responsibility of Cumbria CC and Allerdale BC has no formal influence over them. Waterloo St buildings were accepted in principle, but were held over until the next meeting pending clarification of the buildings involved*.



Kirkgate Centre



Brigham Memorial Hall



Waterloo Street buildings*



Papcastle Village Hall



Barclays Bank



Saints Rooms



Cockermouth Library



Co-op Building



Cumberland BS



Ford Keeper's Cottage



Old HSBC Building



'Pepperpot House'



Former Police Station



'Grand Theatre'



Rope Walk



Former Railway Bridge

These are the first entries onto the Allerdale BC Local Heritage List. Back in 2013, Cockermonth Civic Trust was invited by Allerdale BC to take the lead in piloting a process for the District. Accordingly, 3 members of our committee attended a course on local listing provided by English Heritage, (now Historic England). Subsequently, Duncan Keeler developed our local process in consultation with Helen Brownlie and we, as a Civic Trust, have proved the process using these initial nominations. There was a significant delay when the Council decided not to consider nominations within Conservation Areas, however this has now been fully resolved.

Now that the process is in place, community groups elsewhere in Allerdale can potentially use it. If anyone within the Civic Trust feels that an additional asset should be considered for nomination within Cockermonth and District, i.e. including our surrounding villages, we would be happy to assist. Indeed, we already have 3 additional nominations under consideration for Papcastle - the stone walling throughout the village, the Old Pump House and The Burroughs.

Cockermonth is blessed with Grade I Listed Buildings (The Castle & Wordsworth House), and a significant number of Grade II Listed Buildings and structures, (226), all of which are considered to be of national importance and attract strict planning protection. So why do we need Local Listing as well? Local heritage listing is a means for the community and the local authority to jointly identify assets that are valued as distinctive elements of the local historic environment. It assists the local authority in knowing the location of such assets and what it is about them that is significant when developing strategic local plans and considering specific planning applications. There are no additional planning restrictions however, such as those required for Grade I and II listed structures.

Lecture Programme

A reminder that the last lecture of this season is on Wednesday, **18th April**, at 7.30pm at the Friends Meeting House. NOTE that this last lecture is delayed by 2 weeks from its normal date due to Easter. Our speaker will be Joe Broomfield, Allerdale Town Manager for Cockermonth, and he will speak about the role of the town manager. Clearly it is also an opportunity for him to hear your views.

Annual Lunch, Wednesday 2nd May

Our annual lunch this year will be in the Derwent Restaurant at the Trout Hotel, 12 noon for 12.30, Wednesday 2nd May. The cost will be £20 per person. Our after dinner speaker will be Nat Mitchell from Allison's Chemist. He will clearly focus on his experiences in pharmacy with a few anecdotes. If you would like to come, could you please send a cheque to our Treasurer, Elizabeth, along with your menu choices on the attached form. Please submit the form as soon as possible but no later than 21st April so that we can submit the menu choices to the Trout in good time.

Visit to Barnard Castle, Wednesday 13th June

Our trip this year is to Barnard Castle and Rokeby Park, cost per person is £28. The itinerary will be as follows:

- 08.30 coach pick up in the Memorial Gardens car park on Wakefield Road.
- Coffee/tea and a scone in the Witham Cafe on arrival in Barnard Castle.
- a walking tour of the market town of Barnard Castle with a local guide, David Butler.
- free time in Barnard Castle for lunch and a possible visit to the castle itself, (English Heritage, admission not included). If the weather is good, you may wish to picnic within the castle grounds.

- transfer to Rokeby Park for a guided tour, (2 groups). Rokeby Park is a country house in the Italianate Palladian style, (1735). It is now the private home of Sir Andrew Morritt and we have a special opening for our tour. The building is interesting in its own right, but is famous as being the original home of the painting, 'The Rokeby Venus' by Velazquez, a copy of which still hangs in the saloon. The house also contains the collection of fine 18th century needlework pictures by Anne Morritt.

- we aim to leave for home by 17.00 at the latest. Note that there are no refreshments available at Rokeby Park, so you might wish to leave something on the coach for the return journey.

If you would like to come, could you please send a cheque to our Treasurer, Elizabeth, with the attached form. Please submit the form as soon as possible but no later than 2nd June so that we can open up seats to non-members if we have a shortfall, (we need around 23 to avoid a loss).

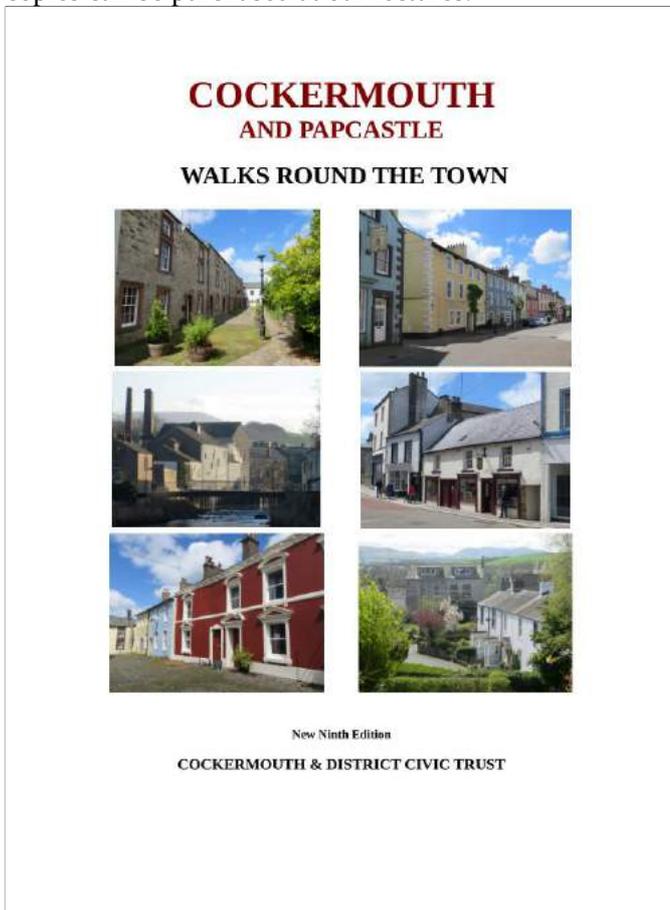
Market Place

Cumbria County Council have finally decided that the Market Place roadway needs repair and since the repair is now so urgent, there is no time for consultation. We have been informed that the repair is planned for April. The Council intend to replace the main roadway blocks with black tarmac on the basis that it will be too expensive to repair and maintain the blocks. We have asked them to consider coloured tarmac but they rejected this on the basis that coloured tarmac will fade & be impossible to colour match in the future. The pavement areas and mosaics are generally considered to be in reasonable condition. Our County Councillor, Rebecca Hanson, is seeking to ensure that the raised pedestrian cross over areas remain as block paving.

The only exception to the condition of the mosaics is the one outside Banks Ironmongers which has been cracked since it was first installed & has deteriorated over time, which is not helped by vehicles parking on it. It has been decided that this one needs to be removed. We are seeking, in conjunction with Vanessa of Banks, to get this relaid within the Confluence Area.

Walks round the Town

Eric Apperley has kindly reviewed and substantially revised our publication, 'Cockermouth, Walks round the Town' to issue 9, with a new cover. Bernard Bradbury wrote the original version over 40 years ago and a lot has changed since then. The new edition now includes a walk round the Papcastle Conservation Area as well. The retail price of the new book is £3. However, it is available to members at an introductory price of £2 and copies can be purchased at our lectures.



A Vision for Cockermouth 2018 to 2029

The Cockermouth Vision Group have completed the consultation draft and had an open consultation morning at the URC on 17th March when members of the public were able to view the draft and make comment. Copies of the draft have also been provided to local councillors and relevant Cockermouth organisations.

The overall vision is stated to be:

'Cockermouth to be maintained and enhanced as a high quality place to live and work through active

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protection, innovative development, and sustainable growth'.

The themes of the document are:

- Sustainable Communities
- Housing
- Economy
- Built & Historic Environment
- Natural Environment
- Ideas

The document is partly structured to follow the format of the Allerdale Local Plan to highlight the relevance of the comments to those undertaking the next review of the Plan. However, it is intended that the document will be widely available to other authorities and organisations and be widely available through a variety of sources, including our own web site.

The vision concludes that in 2029, Cockermouth will

- Be proud of its unique identity
- Offer employment opportunities for all
- Be a town that blends into the countryside
- Resist future flooding events
- Encourage visitors to enjoy its heritage
- Have sustainable food production
- Foster nature and wildlife
- Have a town centre full of independent shops

If you would like a copy of the 'Vision' to read, please ask a member of the Civic Trust Committee.

Out of Town Development

We have objected in detail to the application for an 'out of town' development behind The Lakes Centre on Low Road, primarily intended for 'B&M'. We have also encouraged members who think in the same way to object individually.

We are not objecting to the presence of B&M itself in Cockermouth. What we are doing is objecting to the development of an out of town store with free car parking on a site that is earmarked in the Local Plan as a brownfield site for industrial development. There is no doubt that such a store will have an unfair trading advantage over some town centre shops and if we wish to achieve the vision of continuing 'to have a town centre full of independent shops', we as a community must be proactive to achieve this goal.

Town Centre Shops

It is no secret that many of our independent town centre shops are already struggling financially and there have been a number of closures already with more potentially in the pipeline. The footfall has not returned to pre-flood levels and even though we have new housing developments, this does not seem to have made a positive impact. It is a case of 'use it or lose it' and we

all can help by doing that bit extra shopping in town, and encouraging friends to do the same.

Trees on St Helen's Street

It was agreed at committee a while back that it would be good to plant some trees along St Helens Street, on the bank on the left hand side as you approach the road junction near Cockermouth School. Cockermouth Travel, (Paul Cusack), quickly agreed that they could provide funding for the trees and Cockermouth School indicated that they would help with the planting. It has been more difficult getting the necessary permissions on what is County Council land, and checking that there are no services that could be disrupted by the growing roots. Julian Smith, the Parks and Spaces Officer for Allerdale BC, has been particularly helpful in getting the necessary agreement from Cumbria CC. We now have agreement in principle to plant 30 trees around 10 metres apart, 15 rowan and 15 birch. They have been chosen to be slow growing & limited in height. We are still hopeful that we can plant the trees during the 'Spring Window', but time is running out so we may have to wait for an autumn planting.

Himalayan Balsam

Himalayan Balsam has rapidly become one of the UK's most widespread invasive weed species, colonising river banks, roadways and urban spaces & gardens, and it successfully competes with native plant species thereby reducing native biodiversity. It dies back in the winter and it can leave river banks bare of vegetation and liable to erosion. It can be controlled by pulling it up before the seeds develop, for example by the removal of plants by hand, as the plant is easy and safe to pull up.

It is clearly a significant problem around Cockermouth, particularly, but not exclusively on the river banks, and despite some previous attempts at removing it. We are still hoping to organise a 'grand bash' around June time involving a number of Cockermouth groups. We will need many volunteers please so even if you can't help yourself, think of willing relatives, neighbours and friends!

Cumbrian Association

As stated in the last newsletter, we have declined to renew our membership of NWACTS for 2018/19. We have now written to the other 10 Cumbrian Civic Societies to determine if there is interest in establishing a 'loose association' of Cumbrian Societies whereby we exchange information on our activities, pick up on any common threads across the county and possibly arrange occasional get togethers. So far, the responses have been disappointing although no-one has yet said no. That is apart from Penrith who we found out had disbanded in 2015, (on the basis that they now have a Town Council so don't need a Civic Society!). We have had positive interest from 3 societies:

- Wigton Civic Society
- Kirby Lonsdale Civic Society
- Carlisle & District Civic Trust

A further 3 societies said that they would discuss this suggestion at their February meeting, but have not yet replied; (Appleby, Kendal and Ambleside). We have had no response at all from Windermere or Barrow.

Initially, we will look to establish a communication route between the societies that have replied and see how things develop from there.

Cockermouth Live

Cockermouth Live will take place over the weekend, Friday 29th June to Sunday 1st July. We will be providing castle tours on each day plus the Monday over this festival weekend.

Heritage Open Days

For the first time, Heritage Open Days will take place over 2 weekends this year:

- Thursday 6th to Sunday 9th September
- Thursday 13th to Sunday 16th September

The Civic Trust intend to lead on 3 activities:

- Castle tour on Friday 14th September
- Exhibition of Cockermouth in 1967 and in 2017, 50 years on, Saturday 8th September
- Conservation Area Tours, Saturday 8th September

The exhibition will be based on the photographs that Brian Coley presented at our 50th anniversary celebrations comparing Cockermouth at the birth of the Civic Trust 50 years ago with Cockermouth in 2017.

Banks Ironmongers, Percy House and Isel Hall have all agreed to participate again this year. The Masonic Lodge have decided to drop out now due to falling attendances. Our grateful thanks to them since they have participated every year since we first organised a Cockermouth HODS weekend, back in 2007.

Member's Meetings & Lectures

The committee have discussed the relatively low attendances that we are now getting at our lecture evenings and whether we can change anything to improve attendance. We raised this at the February lecture, but perhaps not surprisingly, those there were happy with the current arrangements. One suggestion that we had was to trial a day time lecture, but we recognise that we do have members who work & therefore would be excluded. Another suggestion was to replace the February lecture with one in May when the weather should be better with more daylight. We would welcome your views.

Phil Campbell, Chairman