**Allithwaite Upper**

**Parish Council**

**Annual Report**

**2017-18**

**1) The Parish Council – An Overview**

## The Parish Council is a statutory local authority set up under the Local Government Act 1972. It operates in the area of a defined civil parish or group of parishes. In Cumbria there are three types of local authority - the County Council, the District or Borough Councils and the Town or Parish Councils.

Parishes are the smallest areas of civil administration in England. Parish Councils provide the statutory tier of local government closest to the people. (Civil parishes should not be confused with ecclesiastical parishes and their Parochial Church Councils.) Parish Councils are seen as an essential part of the structure of local democracy and have a vital role in acting on behalf of the communities they represent.

They:

* Give views, on behalf of the community, on planning applications and other proposals that affect the parish.
* Undertake projects and schemes that benefit local residents.
* Work in partnership with other bodies to achieve benefits for the parish.
* Alert relevant authorities to problems that arise or work that needs to be undertaken.
* Help the other tiers of local government keep in touch with their local communities.

The council is made up of councillors elected by the electors of the parish. Every year the council elects one of them to be the Chair of the council. The council has a paid officer who organises meetings and helps to carry out and implement the council's decisions, it is a dual role which also covers the financial management of the council’s budget and finances in the capacity as the Responsible Financial Officer of the council - this officer is called the Clerk. The Clerk does not vote or make decisions; that is the role of the councillors.

Parish Councils have a range of powers and duties which essentially relate to local matters, such as looking after open spaces, play areas, street lighting, bus shelters, and much more. They also have the power to raise money through the council tax.

All meetings of the council and its committees are open to the general public and the press, except in very exceptional circumstances. The time and place of meetings is advertised beforehand - on the parish notice board. You cannot speak while the normal business of the meeting is being conducted. However, some time is allowed at the meeting when members of the public may address the council on an issue that concerns them.

The council minutes are held by the council's Clerk and are available for public inspection. It is best to make arrangements in advance to see them. The Agendas for each meeting are placed on the Parish Council Notice boards by the Post Office in Lindale and the Village Hall in High Newton. Meeting agendas and approved minutes are also posted on the Parish Council’s website.

The Parish Council is consulted by the relevant Planning Authority (which is the National Park Authority) on all planning applications. Any views expressed by the Parish Council will be taken into account by the Planning Authority before a decision is made, providing the points made are relevant to the determination of a planning application. The final decision is made by the Planning Authority, **not** the Parish Council.

1. **Parish Council Responsibilities**

The Parish Council is responsible for the following areas within the Parish:

**Lindale**

* The Recreation Ground, play equipment, including the Skateboard area and the bridge over the stream.
* The two bus shelters.
* Wilkinson Monument.
* Coronation Tree Area.
* Yew Tree Green.
* The War Memorial.
* Benches around the village.
* Waterfall area (verge near roadside)
* Cattle trough.
* Windermere Road
* Toilets in Recreation ground

**High & Low Newton**

* Ornamental Gardens.
* Bus shelter.
* Benches in ornamental gardens and 2 others in village.
1. **Chair’s Statement by Councillor Mike Squire**

During the year the Parish Council held full council meetings every month excluding August, and December. In addition, during the year councillors attended a number of meetings as representatives of the parish council, such as Taylor Newton and Hibbert Trust and Lindale Village Hall Committee. Members also attended other meetings as part of their Parish Councillor role, such as Cartmel and Grange Local Area Partnership and LDNPA Meetings.

Throughout the year the Parish Council have responded to a number of consultations and surveys from CCC, SLDC, LDNPA and considered 21 planning applications.

As the Parish Council does not have any sources of income, finance is raised through the precept process which is charged as part of your local SLDC Council Tax. The Parish precept for 2017/18 was £17,395, this represented a 0% increase on the previous year. This has contributed towards the upkeep of the Parish Areas and other running costs. The parish council has been able to operate within this annual budget, with a surplus of unallocated/unspent funds at the year end. For 2018/19 members of the Parish Council agreed an annual budget of £17,395. So that for the sixth year running there will be no increase in the precept

The amount shown on Council Tax bills may vary due to a change in the way Council Benefit is funded due to the numbers receiving benefit in our parish and the way SLDC receives funding from Central Government.

The Parish Council is being asked to take on a lot of extra responsibilities and this means extra costs. We have made savings where it seemed reasonable but the cost of unavoidable commitments has increased. Councillors are unpaid volunteers, but we rely on the paid services of our Clerk for much of the clerical work which is involved; she looks after the finances, provides valuable guidance and advice, deals with correspondence, prepares papers for our meetings and keeps the minutes. There are also additional costs in respect of the Parish Council’s responsibility for the public toilets in the recreation ground. We are grateful to South Lakes Audi for funding the cleaning service to the toilets, and to the organisers of the bonus ball for their contribution to costs.

The Parish Council has put in place improvements to the footpath between the skateboard park and the recreation ground. We have also installed a safety rail on the steps at Skittergate, which can be potentially hazardous in adverse weather. The seat adjacent to the Grange Road bus stop was beyond repair and has been replaced.

The Parish Council demonstrated its commitment to the local environment by organising and taking part in two litter picks in the parish in Spring and Autumn and a large amount of rubbish was collected on both occasions.

Last year questionnaires were distributed throughout the parish to enable us to review the 2008 Community Plan. A good response has allowed us to prepare a full report on the findings, which will be distributed in the immediate future. One of the major findings of this review was that nearly 80% of respondents felt it was important to change the name of our parish from Allithwaite Upper PC to Lindale and Newton-in-Cartmel PC, in line with the official guidance, which states that the name should indicate the geographical location. This change was duly implemented, with effect from April of this year. Another question asked whether Lindale residents were concerned about the proposed closure of Lindale Church. Although more than 50% of Lindale residents thought it important that the Church should remain open, the congregation remains very small and the diocese is pressing ahead with the closure programme. Apart from the loss of this community place of worship we will also lose the Parish Newsletter, which we have used for very many years to inform residents of matters of local interest.

With assistance from SLDC and Cumbria action for Sustainability (CaFS), we have been successful in obtaining a grant from the Rural Community Energy Fund to carry out a full technical and environmental study to assess the feasibility of using Lindale Beck to produce small scale hydroelectric power for community benefit. This grant will fund all costs up to and including planning permission, should the study prove successful.

Your council remains short of two councillors for the Lindale ward and I would very much like to see volunteers to fill these vacancies.

I am grateful to my fellow councillors and our clerk, Debbie Cowperthwaite for their continuing support and assistance throughout the past year.

**Councillor Mike Squire May 2018**

1. **Parish Councillors**

**Lindale Ward:-**Cllr Mike Squire (Chair 2017/18) Cllr Maynard (Vice 2017/18)

Cllr Armstrong, Cllr McClure, Cllr Clarke.

**Newton Ward:** Cllr Bate and Cllr Wightman