



Ravenglass Village Forum

June 2014

www.ravenglassforum.org.uk

No 15

What next?

We are looking for suggestions for new projects. If there is some improvement that you would like to see in our village, please may we have your proposals? You can submit them to the Editor by letter or email for the attention of the Committee. My contact details are at the foot of the back page. Please include maps, sketches or photos if you wish. We have a certain amount of money, which should not be lying idle. We can also raise funds to help with projects if we can show possible funders that they will provide a positive benefit to our residents and visitors.

What have we done so far?

You can't see our first improvement. Main Street used to be festooned with telephone cables radiating from two 'maypoles' while formidable Heath Robinson contraptions on walls supplied power to the houses. We persuaded BT and Norweb to bury the cables at their own expense to unclutter the skyline. We also worked with the County and Borough Councils to replace the old lamp standards with the elegant blue ones, which shed light downwards and do not pollute the night sky.

In co-operation with the Parish Council and the Lake District National Park we created the Millennium Garden. The back panels of the distinctive blue 'Ravenglass seats' were designed by two local girls, Olivia and Lucy Inglis, and the Ravenglass Boating Association donated the flagpole. Leo and Debbie Saldanha look after planting in the Millennium Garden and we provide a new Union Flag whenever the old one wears out. The Market Cross plaque was a joint project with the Parish Council and we have almost finished the improvements to the northern end of the Village Green. One of our members, Jane Frémont, organised the removal of the planters from the top of the bund, where plants never had much chance against winter gales and salt spray, and created a fine floral display with them in the picnic area of the village car park.

In 2009 the old equipment in the Playground failed a RoSPA inspection. The cost of complete refurbishment was in excess of £50,000, far beyond the Parish Council's resources. Funders do not give support to local government bodies for items that they have a statutory duty to provide, like playgrounds, but the Forum was eligible to apply. We won a major grant from the National Lottery which, together with support from the Copeland Community Fund, the NDA and local businesses, enabled the Parish Council to re-equip the Playground completely.

We objected unsuccessfully to the introduction of parking charges by the LDNPA but our voice was heard in the introduction of on-street parking restrictions to protect residents' interests, new road signage and (with partial success) the restriction of visitor traffic in Main Street. The Parish Council is aware that problems still occur with unnecessary traffic and it is negotiating with the Highways Authority for more effective measures. We joined with the Parish Council and others in objecting successfully to a planning application for an 80m wind turbine in Drigg, which would have been clearly visible from here. Last year an application for a 45m turbine from the same developer was approved, despite strong local opposition, but this year we helped to have an application for an increase in its height to 57m thrown out. The LDNPA did not let us down this time.

We are an independent community association but we work with the Parish Council and share information with it. Some of our projects have required its permission; it owns the Village Green, of which the Millennium Garden is a part. For others we have needed its support when dealing with other official bodies, such as the Highway Authority for signage and the Market Cross plaque. One of our aims is to improve the visual, social and economic environment of the village. Having fulfilled several long-term projects, we now welcome your suggestions for more.

Secretary's report

Last year we accomplished the main part of the improvements to the Village Green but there are still some minor works to be done, like the cobbled surrounds for the stonework and the repairs to the litter bin lid, which we have agreed to do as a goodwill gesture. We shall proceed as soon as possible with the information boards that will go on the stone plinths.

At our AGM in June last year we amended our Constitution. A requirement of the old Constitution that Officers should be elected at the AGM prevented the Committee from filling the office of Chairman when it fell vacant during the year 2012-13. Now the new Committee is elected at the AGM and it will appoint the Officers for the year. It can fill any office that falls vacant during its term of office. We also cleared up the vagueness about when the term of office of the Committee ends. The new Committee will be elected *during* the AGM but the old Committee remains in office until the AGM closes.

The other main changes were to the Articles that concern amendments to the Constitution and Dissolution. Most matters are decided by a simple majority vote but these two matters required a two-thirds majority of *all* members. That meant that any Special Resolution to amend the Constitution or to dissolve the Forum in an orderly manner would fail if more than 1/3 of the membership simply did not bother to turn up and vote at a General Meeting. Should the need for Special Resolutions on these matters arise now, they can be carried by a 2/3 majority of those *actually present and voting* at a General Meeting. The moral is: if you want democracy, come and demock. Don't leave decisions to others and then moan afterwards.

The Forum has enjoyed a cordial relationship with the Parish Council during the year but it was not a peaceful year for the Council. Persistent obstruction of its business and abuse of the complaints procedure by a few people led to the resignation of the Chairman, Clerk and at least one other Councillor, who understandably decided that they had had enough. Parish Councillors and the Clerk voluntarily take on legal responsibility for the welfare of our parish and their duties cost them a lot of unpaid time and energy. They did not deserve this interference. With sound leadership from its Vice-Chairman and support from the remaining and newly co-opted Councillors, the Council has made a good recovery. The Forum looks forward confidently to another year of productive partnership with it. We are very happy to see that the Council is proceeding with a handsome new village sign. We discussed the matter several times in the past but we had other projects ahead in the queue and we did not have the time or the funds to take this one on. The Council has the money, thanks to the film company that used the village as a location, and is going ahead.

Notice of AGM

The 14th Annual General Meeting of the Ravenglass Village Forum will take place in Muncaster Parish Hall on Thursday 26 June 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

Agenda

Welcome.

To confirm the Minutes of the 13th Annual General Meeting held on 12 June 2013.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

Secretary's report (edited version above).

Treasurer's report and Statement of Accounts.

Special Resolution to amend the Constitution.

Election of the Committee for 2014-15.

Any other relevant business.

The meeting will be opened for discussion after the formal business. Any resolutions from the floor must be proposed and seconded by members. Time will be allowed before the start of the meeting for registration of new members.

The members of the Committee for 2013-14 are Gary Blythe (Chairman), Ian Bell (Treasurer), Mike Harrington (Secretary), Edna Parr, Carol Stent and Peter van Zeller. We have three vacancies, which we would like to fill for the coming year. If you are interested, please contact the Editor.

Are you a member of the Forum?

Our membership at present is 38; not bad for a small village like Ravenglass, but we would welcome more.

The proportion of our membership to our population indicates the degree of public support we enjoy when we make applications for grants or we have opinions to express on matters that affect the wellbeing of our village. Your support, active or passive, is important to us.

To be a member you must be a resident over the age of 18 and broadly in support of the Forum's aims and objectives. Membership entitles you to attend, speak, propose or second motions and vote at General Meetings. You may also stand for election to the Committee if you wish, but there is no obligation to do so. Membership is free. You will also be entitled to receive the Agenda and Minutes of all meetings, including Committee meetings, by email.

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RiverEsk

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