



Lorton Parish Council

Newsletter winter 2025



Chair's Notes



Welcome to our winter newsletter. After the torrential rain and then the snow of a few weeks ago, we are now back to "normal" weather – wind and rain as I write. But Chrissie's photo (left) shows how beautiful it is where we live (actually, "absolutely stunning" seems more apt).

We now have two vacancies on the parish council. If you are interested, or know someone who might be interested, please come forward. Being a councillor is about getting involved in

your community, and trying to make things better. It does take up some time, but it is very rewarding. Although we have limited power and resources, there is a lot that we keep going for the benefit of the community, such as management of the Pound and the Parish Field, cutting of the verges and the Wild Flower Project; and working with the Yew Tree Hall Committee to ensure we have a village hall for the next 100 years. Over the years there are many one-off projects that the PC has been involved with, one of the most recent being the two interpretation boards. We're seeking active and engaged persons who want to make our community better, so please consider joining us.

The new arrangement for cutting the Parish Field grass, with the PC taking back the management, has worked well. Like the Pound, the Parish Field is a wonderful community asset; it was originally bequeathed to the village for the benefit of the children of the village, and this is how we want it to continue. The field is available to all, but we must insist, please, no dogs.

We are also working with the school to make the school playground available for parking, for example at weekends and for specific village evening events, so watch this space.

I wrote in the last newsletter about the signs on the verges, and the ongoing damage to these. Replacement signs have again been damaged, and therefore the PC has decided that we will not replace these in the future.

I am pleased to report that we have replaced all the village flower tubs, and these have now been filled and planted ready for the spring, when we should have a stunning display. Thanks to Chris Poate, Liz Irlam, Pam Jaques, and their able assistants for taking this on.

Following incidents during the flooding at the beginning of November, we are working with The Melbreak Communities and looking to update the Emergency Plan. Thankfully it wasn't as bad as the floods of November 2009.

Finally, can I please wish all parishioners, friends and guests the compliments of the season, and best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Peter Deeks - Chair

The Melbreak Communities. (TMC)



2025 has been a really good year. We continue to enjoy our monthly coffee and cakes hosted by various local groups. Raising funds helps 'oil the wheels' for our active community. Next year, 2026, is already fully booked so we can look forward to more of the same.

TMC-Wildlife Group has a momentum all of its own. We have so many talented people that make this group the great success that it is. There are lots of opportunities to get involved, do take the opportunity to come along

to our talks and workshops and I promise you will be inspired.

Many people contribute to 'I Naturalist': an App used to record local wildlife sightings. To date in TMC area there has been some 3071 recordings logged and forwarded to the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre.

We work with the charity Linking Lives, based in Cockermouth. People there make superb wildlife boxes using locally grown wood. The boxes bring in funding for TMC-WG and Linking Lives and make excellent presents...by the way! TMC-WG has been instrumental in supplying swift boxes in the area including a trio of boxes at The Yew Tree Hall (which this year have actually been used by the swifts) and a multi box unit in the tower at St Cuthberts. Eleven barn owl boxes have been installed at appropriate locations in the hope that by providing good housing near habitat for voles etc., will help increase the population. A bit like living next door to a supermarket! The Curlew Recovery project is thriving and we are all learning a lot about the bird's habits. West Cumbria Rivers' Trust have helped us with this project. We have been successful in finding grants for this project from the LDNPA FIPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes). Thank you to everyone who has donated for our various projects and given generously of their time and expertise.

When we join forces with others we achieve so much more. Have a look on our website, we are not up to date with everything but there should be some information or do come back to me for info on any of our projects.

We hope to set up a Himalayan Balsam Bashing project next year in partnership with WCRT who currently are applying for funding.

On a more modest note, we have a small group meeting once a month at Loweswater Village Hall called 'Crafternoon'. A friendly couple of hours is spent with each concentrating on their own craft project, chatting, drinking tea and of course, eating the mandatory homemade cake. Everyone is welcome. One doesn't have to make a big splash in life; small things are worthwhile and valuable to our local community.

And didn't our Apple Day go down well? We were still juicing apples well into late afternoon. So good to see children enjoying the simpler things in life. A joint audio project was set up between the school, the Local History Society and TMC. The school children interviewed people who had grown up in the area to find out about their lives. We are hoping this second Apple Day is sowing the 'pips' for future annual apple days and other related projects, there are more initiatives planned. I was told about one four-year-old, who when asked if she was going to the Apple Day replied 'Oh yes, I come every year'. I do hope the same sentence is uttered by the same child in fifty, sixty and more years' time.

There are other projects. The Eco Book Club is a small reading group, if anyone would like to join, please let me know. The Net Zero Group has been able to offer house surveys aiming to find those cold spots. We still have our Emergency Plan, which will be updated again soon and redistributed.

Come along to the first Coffee and Cakes of 2026. This is hosted by TMC on 10th of January, YTH. Talk to us there if you want to find out more about any of our projects, or if you have an idea you think may be of interest to the community, please talk to me.

I wish you all a peaceful festive period with time to enjoy the company of friends.

Glenis Postlethwaite – Vice Chair and Chair of TMC

The Pound

We had some storm damage at the Pound during Storm Amy in early October, and the rowan tree behind the bench was blown over. Unfortunately, this was almost snapped at the base, and has to be removed. This has led us to review the other trees at the Pound, and so we will be carrying out some coppicing and pollarding work shortly.

The Pound is a beautiful place: the beck is raw and powerful in high water, and quiet and serene on a summer's day. Personally, our grandchildren love it. Please respect the water, the place, and our neighbours.

Peter Deeks, Chair

Update on Yew Tree Hall Improvement Project



Following a number of meetings with representatives from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) team and after receiving advice from an independent funding strategist, it has become clear that it is likely to take up to five years to secure significant funding from the NLHF. There is also a real risk that they will not approve the extent of funding required to move the project forward in the way it had been envisaged. Bearing in mind these factors, Yew Tree Hall

Management Committee, the trustees, have decided to use a different approach to progress the project far more quickly using a number of smaller grant funders and donations from the community.

This means that the project will need to be undertaken in a few phases, with the first phase to include the high priority work such as access into the building for everyone in our community. Due to the availability of funding in the short term, a simpler and more cost-effective external access option, as an alternative to the single storey extension, will be needed. WK Design Architects have been instructed to design this option ready to be submitted for planning permission and Listed Building Consent.

The overall objectives of the project will still be met by the alternative scheme, which is based loosely on option A from the original community consultation back in May 2025.

It is felt that moving the project along in this new direction is far more achievable financially and will mean that a start can be made on the initial building work, hopefully soon next year. Continued donations from the community are really important, as the availability of funding through grants is finite and the trustees want to improve the hall as comprehensively as possible.

More information and designs about the revised scheme will be shared with everyone as soon as we can. Thank you for your patience.

Cathy Lee – Cllr and Chair of the Yew Tree Hall Development Group

Benches

We are progressing (albeit slowly) with the repairs to the benches, and are concentrating on the most dilapidated bench near "sewage works corner". However, we are still looking for volunteers who are willing to "adopt a bench" so if you want to help, please contact the chair.

Peter Deeks – Chair

United Utilities Crummock Water Position (as advised November 2025)



The following information was provided by UU in November and is subject to change when the results of the ongoing feasibility assessments are available.

Assuming there are no major issues, there will then be further Public Exhibitions – at Loweswater Village Hall, Cockermouth and Ireby (joint with Chapelhouse and Overwater). These are expected to be in February 2026, dates to be confirmed. Updated information will be placed on the UU website.

There is then envisaged a two-week consultation period on the updated documents – responses to be sent via the UU website. The submission of updated planning documents to the LDNPA will follow – 31st March 2026 is the latest target date for that submission. The LDNP Planning Committee is expected to consider the application mid-2026. Obviously subject to planning approval, works could commence late 2026 or early 2027.

Mike Milner – Parish Clerk

Parish Plan

The Parish Council is now preparing the next stage of delivering the objectives set out in the Parish Plan. At the January meeting, we will agree a date and venue for a public open day where residents can learn more about the plan and share their views.

One of the strongest themes from residents' responses was concern about the speed of traffic through the village. There is a review pending by Cumberland Council, and we would like to see the existing 30mph limit (by virtue of the streetlights) properly signposted in the village. In the meantime we have decided to provide "20 is plenty" signs at the village entrances, and this project is in progress.

Garan Conley

Parish Council Meetings

7 January 2026 7:30pm Yew Tree Hall

4 March 2026 7:30pm Yew Tree Hall

6 May 2026 7:30pm Yew Tree Hall

Lorton Parish Council Contacts

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