

Aspatria Town Council

Chairman's Report 2010/11

The past year has been one of sadness. With horrific shooting in and around Whitehaven and the school bus crash outside of Keswick. In the summer the town also suffered the loss of Sgt David Monkhouse who was killed in action in Afghanistan. The community has supported his family and could not fail to be impressed by the solemnness and precision of his funeral.

In June after a year of closure and thanks to the hard work and persistence of the two members of the Swimming Pool Committee the swimming pool opened and was enjoyed a large number of people particular our youngsters during the summer.

In July we held our annual Civic Service in St Kentigern's Church which was again well attended by the Mayor of Allerdale, Mayors from surrounding towns, the Deputy Leader of Allerdale Borough Council and other dignities.

This year the annual senior citizens trip went to Blackpool. The weather was relatively kind to us and most if not all people enjoyed the day. My thanks go to Cllr. Tinnion who looked after one of the buses.

During the summer the Youth Wing with support of the Council again ran events for our young people in Memorial Park while our Evening Supervisor organised activities during the evening.

The Best Kept Garden competition was again sponsored by the Cumberland Building Society and produced the usual crop of winners. We thank the building society for their sponsorship, their assistance with the judging and in making the presentations.

In late summer in partnership with the local social landlords the council purchased a number of grit bins which were filled by the County Council but little did we know how well they would be used during the coming winter months.

We also heard that our Allerdale Councillors had been successful in obtaining funding for new play equipment in Victoria Park. This is due to be completed by June.

Remembrance Sunday Parade and following service were very well attended by the various organisations and our residents. The parade and service were particularly significant this year with a wreath being laid in church until a permanent memorial to Sgt Monkhouse is in place.

The annual Light for a Life Service took place in the Methodist Chapel on 5th December which was followed by the Christmas lights switch on. Father Christmas visited Harriston and the main streets of the town before assisting with the actual 'switch on'. We thank Sealy UK for the bed as first prize for our free drawing and the growing group of businesses who made donations towards the ever increasing cost of the lights.

The Senior Citizens Christmas Treat was held on 14th December in the Masonic Hall when over 100 residents enjoyed a meal, free raffle, entertainment by Roe Valley and of course the obligatory game of Bingo. Everybody seemed to have a good afternoon. I thank my fellow councillors and everybody who made donations or helped in any way to make the afternoon another success.

The Council during the year has given financial support to a number of local organisation including Neighbourhood Watch. I thank Cllr Finlay for re-vitalising the scheme in the Town.

During the first week of March various organisations were involved in running a 'Together We Can Week' which brought a number of agencies together to produce a week of events and showcase their work in the Community. Cllr Finlay and others are working together to ensure the spirit of the week is not lost.

The Town Council is active in the Aspatria Rural Group, a group of seven Parish Councils which has employed Shirley Muir to produce a community plan for the area with a view of drawing down funding for the projects identified in the plan.

We remain concerned regarding the appearance of the Youth Wing and the effect that it is having on the pupils, staff and visitors to Beacon Hill School

and particularly the very uncertain future of the swimming pool both of which are owned by the County Council

Speeding traffic and poor behaviour of some drivers particularly in and around Brandraw Car Park have been again identified as a priority by the police but despite a number of arrests and persons reported for summons little progress has been made. The Council with some financial support from the police now have installed remote CCTV on the Library which covers the Car Park

The council continue to negotiate with the Borough Council over the future ownership of Queen Street Car Park and working in partnership to improve the accessibility of the toilets in the town. Unfortunately at this time these negotiation appear to have stalled

During the year the Mayors Charity has been to raise money to improve disabled facilities in St Kentigern's Church and I was pleased to present a cheque for nearly £200 to that cause.

Michael our town caretaker continues to improve the appearance of the town and I thank him for his hard work, flexibility and conscientiousness

During the year a number of residents gave up their time to assist in looking after the park and delivering the newsletters and I take this opportunity to thank them for their support without which we would have difficulty in ensuring delivery of the newsletter to ever house in the Town.

I also thank all my fellow councillors for their support particularly Councillor Rose for being the interim Deputy Mayor, Councillor Reay as Chairman of the Parks and Allotments, Councillor Barker as editor of the Newsletter.

Last but not least I also thank Allison for her hard work and the excellent support she gives the council