

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT May 2024 – 2025

Following the Parish Council Meeting, May 2024, a number of issues remained to be resolved. The problem of the grass cutting of the greens in Ireby was settled by an agreement signed with My Paul Batty of an honorary payment of £750 for the season to run from Spring to October 2024, to be reviewed in Spring 2025.

Frustrated in our attempts to obtain a grant from the War Memorials Trust towards the cost of cleaning the War Memorial, the Council agreed to pay Butterworth Cleaning Services of Kirkby Lonsdale from our own funds. This marked our tribute to the dead of the last war commemorating the 80th centenary of D-day and Victory in Europe Day. It has proved very appropriate in view of the voluntary work in restoring the churchyard completed by church members and the local community. We have been pleased to re-instate the annual grant for the upkeep of the churchyard as the legal situation has been resolved.

Controversial plans by the Sustrans Group to run a cycle track or "Greenway" along the A65 through the centre of Cowan Bridge met with strong opposition from the residents of the parish. The plans were first put forward by the Sustrans Group at a public drop-in event in June 2024. In view of the safety concerns expressed by the residents, the Parish Council organised a very well-attended Residents' Meeting on 8th July. The shortage of options for both pedestrians and cyclists on an already busy, narrow and dangerous road, the loss of layby space with the consequent threat to the viability of the village shop and the safety of the school children and others using the public bus stops were all highlighted. In response before the end of the year, Sustrans suggested alternative arrangements. These were discussed at a second well attended Residents Meeting in January with 33 residents voting to reject the revised route and 8 rejecting the entire Sustrans project. There was no support for the revised scheme. Sustrans were informed of our decision but there have been no further developments so far as we are aware.

The future of the red telephone box in the centre of Ireby has now become an issue. It sustained serious damage when a local tractor driver drove into it. The initial damage has been repaired by the family concerned but the box was in poor condition before the accident and further, expensive work needs to be done. The telephone box is the property of the Parish Council and we are responsible for its upkeep. The future maintenance of the box is the subject of item 9 on the current agenda and the decision will have to be made, whether to conserve, replace or remove it. The possibility of its being used to house a defibrillator is under consideration.

On July 8th we received notification from Lancashire County Council that a Modification Order had been issued modifying the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way identifying the byway running from the A65 along a grass track to the junction with footpath FPO/19005, then on to Todgill Farm and the junction with Church Lane.

Councillor Howard and Councillor Makinson have attended the Parish Forums organised by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. The National Park Management Plan is well in hand with a draft network plan available on line. A Residents' Survey has been completed highlighting pressure to support nature's recovery and the problems generated by inadequate affordable housing within the Park.

Finally as Chairman, I must thank our Councillors and Clerk for the time and support they have given so willingly in the service of the Parish Council.