

Local News and Views



Eddie Martin
Leader of Cumbria County Council

Welcome to this first edition of Local News and Views

We've created this newsletter specifically for parish councillors to keep you up to date with major plans within the county council and what they mean at a local level.

I'm very keen that as a council we work more closely than ever with our councillor colleagues at all levels of local government. Likewise, I'm keen to make sure that we are open and responsive on the issues which matter to you.

Therefore, in order to mark this first edition of Local News and Views, I recently invited Peter Smith, Chair of St Bees Parish Council, to interview me at my home.

Peter identified a number of issues that he feels are of importance to his locality and wider parish councils and put these to me during the interview. His questions covered the role of parish councils and quality council status, our plans for highways improvements and infrastructure developments relating to any potential new nuclear builds and more.

Peter told me: *"It was a very good opportunity to meet and in particular to discover how Parish councils have more ability to influence than we perhaps recognise."*

"I chose to cover those particular issues not only because of their relevance to us at St Bees but I considered that they would have been of interest to many parishes in the county."

A number of film clips from the interview are now online for you to view at our dedicated YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/TheCCCinterview. If you have any difficulties accessing this, please contact us on the email address below and we will post you a DVD copy.

I hope you'll find both Local News and Views, and the online interview pertinent to the concerns of parish councillors across the county.

I look forward to receiving your feedback on the newsletter and interview, and your views on any other issues you would like us to cover in future editions, at parish.editor@cumbriacc.gov.uk.

If you would like Eddie Martin, Leader of Cumbria County Council, to visit **your parish council**, please contact Karen Strong on 01228 227 480 or email karen.strong@cumbriacc.gov.uk

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Flood recovery work continues

Following the floods in November 2009 Cumbria Highways staff across the county continue with the considerable effort of reinstating the county's highway infrastructure.

This includes the replacement of damaged or collapsed bridges, carriageway and footway repairs, stabilisation of slopes and more.

In the immediate aftermath of the floods, twenty carriageway bridges across Cumbria were closed to traffic. Following the considerable progress which has been made, this total has now been reduced to seven and will hopefully be further reduced to three by the end of October. Those three which remain will be Workington (Calva) Bridge and Northside Bridge in Workington and Bouthrey Bridge in South Lakeland.



The value of the overall Transport Recovery Programme work excluding repairs to public rights of way is valued at around £25m and is largely being funded by central government via the Department for Transport emergency capital maintenance arrangements.

For regularly updated information on the seven key bridges still closed to traffic including Low Lorton, Little Braithwaite, Back Barrow and Scarness Culvert, go online to tiny.cc/n6fsa.

Which are the services that matter to you?

We're currently consulting with councillors, organisations and residents on our Council Plan for 2011-2012.

This plan will set out what we're trying to achieve as a council and how we can continue to deliver the services that really matter to you and your constituents.

As you of course know, the government announced local authority budget cuts in June, with more to follow soon. This means it's more important than ever that we hear from you about which services you value the most, and how you think services could be delivered differently in future.

The consultation will comprise three phases: from 13 September to 11 October we want your feedback about which of our services you think are absolutely essential, and which you feel are extras.

In phase two, in November, we'll get back to you with more detailed plans about our priorities and ask for your views.

Then, in December and January - phase three - we'll ask for your opinions on our recommendations, before county councillors make a final decision in February next year.

Throughout each of the consultation phases you can find information and give your views via booklets which will be available in libraries, Local Links, at county council offices and online at www.cumbria.gov.uk/sayit/budget.asp.

Go online to the council's website at www.cumbria.gov.uk to find out about how you can share your views on the Council Plan consultation and the services which are a priority to you with fellow residents and councillors via our new discussion forums.

We're looking forward to hearing from you.

better Highways

Improvements mean Better Highways across the county

Better Highways is a new approach to delivering highways maintenance and improvement services in Cumbria which is due to be rolled in across the county before the end of the year.

The new approach will combine, and build upon, the most successful elements of practices developed by the Highways Stewards to create a more responsive and efficient service.

The Better Highways project is being implemented following an intensive review of how highways reactive maintenance services are delivered across Cumbria. This identified where the most effective work was taking place and how we can remove wasteful activity, with a focus on finding, diagnosing, fixing and preventing highways defects.

The need for locally based teams has been shown to be successful through the Highways Stewards model. The key difference will be that those carrying out inspections will also carry out repairs and that most defects will be repaired at the time of identification.

In order to deliver this service, Cumbria has been divided into 30 areas. Two person Find and Fix teams will patrol and take ownership of repairs in these areas; fixing defects which can be addressed immediately, and prioritising those which can't, for repair at a later date. The current Highways Stewards form an integral part of the new work teams to ensure a smooth transition into the new way of working.

Area Stewards will support the Find and Fix teams providing technical advice and logistical support. An Area Leader will be responsible for delivering the reactive maintenance service within each district and will also support the Area Stewards and Find and Fix teams to deliver work on the ground.

This new way of working has been robustly tested in the Eden area. Roll-in of the project is now set to continue across the county in an anti-clockwise direction and is due for completion by the end of the year.

Cumbria residents can expect a seamless transition to the Better Highways model, with the primary difference on the ground being a more responsive service.

We will be circulating an information pack giving more detail about Better Highways to Parish Councillors in the next few weeks. This pack will include the new contact details for the highways support team in your area. If you have highways issues in the meantime, contact your Area Steward as before.

If you have any additional queries please feel free to contact us on **01768 812188**.



A greener, safer, better connected Cumbria?



We are currently developing the 3rd Local Transport Plan for Cumbria. This is a statutory document that sets out how roads, footways, cycle ways, rights of way and bus and train services in Cumbria will be improved and managed.

The Local Transport Plan will address the five national goals for transport:

- **supporting national economic competitiveness and growth**
- **tackling climate change**
- **contributing to better safety security and health**
- **promoting greater equality of opportunity**
- **improving quality of life and the natural environment**

A high quality, successful Local Transport Plan will be one which meets the needs of the residents, businesses and visitors to Cumbria.

We've recently been asking for your views on the first stage of the plan, in order to understand the views of communities on the challenges and opportunities identified in the strategy to make sure that the final document responds to local needs.

The first phase of the consultation has now closed but you still view the draft core strategy online at tiny.cc/ardl3.

The final Local Transport Plan, which will give more detail about how the core strategy will be implemented, will be published in April 2011.

For more information, contact Senior Transport Policy Officer **Allan McNicoll** on 01228 226 735.

Mobile Libraries – Service Update

The county's mobile library service is changing

The fleet of vehicles has been temporarily reduced from six to three. This means that all the existing stops are still being visited, although the frequency and time or day of the visit has changed.

These operational changes to the service have come as the fleet of vans are ageing and becoming increasingly unreliable and expensive to run and are temporary while we work with all stakeholders to plan for the future of the service.

In the last year alone 50 days of service were lost as a result of repair work needed to vans. By reducing the fleet we are retaining the most reliable vehicles and hope that future disruption will be reduced.

In addition there has been a 40 per cent reduction in use of the service as residents in rural areas become more mobile and are increasingly likely to use a branch library. As user numbers have dropped the cost of running six vehicles has become disproportionately high with costs running at over £70 per user per year.

In order to preserve the quality of the service, we have needed to review how we can deliver the best to our users in the most cost effective way.

Anyone who is housebound and has no one who can visit a library on their behalf may be able to receive our home delivery service. Your local branch library will be able to provide more information about who might be eligible for this.

Many residents have developed friendly relationships with the mobile library drivers, and we are pleased to say that no redundancies have been made as a result of the changes.

If you would like to comment on these changes, please email libraries@cumbriacc.gov.uk or write to **Library Services Headquarters, Arroyo Block, The Castle, Carlisle, CA3 8UR.**



Local knowledge and feedback shapes Fire & Rescue Service plans



Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) is in the process of developing its plan to drive our vision for safer, stronger and more inclusive communities.

The Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2011-14 sets out the service's strategies for prevention, protection, response and organisational development for the coming years and ensures plans are based on effective risk analysis.

A 12 week consultation has seen Cumbria residents, county council staff, councillors and organisations give their views on the draft plan. Prior to the publication of the draft document, a comprehensive Strategic Risk Review was carried out, the results of which were used in the development of the plan.

The review was carried out using information to determine risk at a very local level, including station activity and performance and contextual information that looks at heritage, environment, site specific risk, flooding and rurality issues.

In turn, the draft plan sets out how CFRS will measure response standards by Local Super Output Area (these contain on average around 400 households) rather than at ward level. This means the Fire Service will be able to target prevention, protection and response activity to smaller pockets of Cumbria's local communities.

The formal consultation for the IRMP has now closed, and we are currently in the process of developing an Annual Action Plan for the county as a result of this feedback. Consultation on the Action Plan will begin in October when we will be keen to receive your views.

Go online to the county council's Consultation Hub to find the full IRMP document and the Action Plan when it is released at tiny.cc/4fpj4.

For more information contact **John Moody**, the Fire Service Planning and Performance Manager on **01900 820 271** or email john.moody@cumbriacc.gov.uk



Your questions

We want Local News and Views to reflect the county council issues which matter to you and your constituents most.

Each edition we'll print answers to your queries in this frequently asked questions section.

To start us off, CALC has requested more information about the future of rights of way, Local Committees and Neighbourhood Forums...

Q: What will happen to rights of way and the Parish Paths Initiative now that the council's contract with Capita is reaching its end?

A: **Rob Terwey**, Senior Manager - Transport and Access says : *"The County Council is committed to maintaining and improving public rights of way across Cumbria. The management responsibility for ensuring our rights of way are properly maintained has always rested with the Council and when the contract with Capita comes to an end the delivery of the high quality maintenance programme will continue to be a priority. The Parish Paths Initiative has been highly successful and enables local communities to deliver small projects that they think important. The ending of the contract will have no impact on this initiative."*

Q: Are there plans in hand to review the ways Local Committees and Neighbourhood Forums are delivered?

A: **Lorraine Smyth**, Programmes and Performance manager for the Community Unit says: *"As many of you know Neighbourhood Forum boundaries are being considered for review based on locality working arrangements. The Community Unit is conducting an internal review due to report in October and the council is holding a wider Locality Working review that will report in early 2011. We will keep you updated with the outcome."*

If you have questions on any issues which you feel fellow parish and town councillors would like to hear more about please send them to parish.editor@cumbriacc.gov.uk.

LOCALlinks

and Customer Access update

Work to extend the network of Local Links across the county is continuing. Here we give you an update on some of the key projects underway currently...

Carlisle

Following work to review the functions and footfall of the Adult Services counter and all customer queries, services are now being delivered by Carlisle City Council's contact centre on the county's behalf.

Customers who previously visited the Adult Services counter often also visited Carlisle City's customer contact centre to get advice on city council services. Customers now have one point of contact and work is underway to transfer other county services.

Ulverston

Community consultation revealed that 91 per cent of people in Ulverston prefer face-to-face contact when accessing public sector services. South Lakeland District Council is now leading on the development of the old Town Hall as a central location for the Local Link, with full support from Cumbria County Council. Work is due for completion in October.

Whitehaven

Work with Copeland Borough Council is ongoing to identify how we can provide better access to services to the public in Whitehaven. The development of a Local Link is now underway along with a review of frontline council services in the area. The Link is scheduled to open March 2011.

Kirkby Stephen

Following extensive consultation, the new Local Link in Kirkby Stephen will incorporate a library, community facilities and a brand new children's centre. This project will secure the future of a derelict grade two listed building, as well as providing improved access and extended opening hours as a result of co-locating services.



Longtown Local Link

Local links are a single place where local people can go to find out information about county and district council services and get help and advice from trained customer service advisors.

Local links have already been successfully opened in **Ambleside**, **Aspatria**, **Alston**, **Cleator Moor**, **Grange-over-Sands**, **Longtown**, **Milnthorpe** and **Wigton**. Links are due to open in **Carlisle**, **Dalton**, **Kirkby Stephen**, **Whitehaven** and **Ulverston** this year, with more planned for 2011.

Find up to date information about Local Links across Cumbria at www.cumbria.gov.uk/locallinks.

We value your feedback about Local Links in your area. To give us your thoughts, or for more information, contact **Deborah Turner, Customer Services Manager**, on **01228 227209** or email deborah.turner@cumbriacc.gov.uk

We want to hear from you

If you have any any questions or would like more information about county council services in your area, please get in touch. Contact your local county councillor, or the Community Unit team in your area on the contact details below:

Allerdale

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