

Kentmere Parish Meeting

Notes on Upper Kent Local Area Partnership Meeting 13 June 2011

The following is a synopsis of matters arising at the meeting of the Upper Kent Local Area Partnership (UKLAP) on 13 June 2011 which Kentmere residents may be interested in.

The headings are from the order of the meeting agenda and do not infer importance or priority.

Highways

It had been expected that Keith Masser, CCC, Acting Area Engineer for South Lakeland would attend to speak about highways. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend and no replacement had been arranged. Discussion by attendees indicated that highways problems were an important issue and unsuited to be dealt with on a parish by parish basis; a more unified approach was needed by the LAP. There was a lack of transparency as to how the current and future organisation of the highways departments were intended to operate and how we (the LAP) could interact with them.

Parishes had submitted areas of concern prior to the meeting. These would be analysed by the UKLAP secretariat and developed so that they formed a basis for the next meeting. [During subsequent discussion, it was agreed the date of this meeting would be arranged specifically so that attendance of Keith Masser was ensured]. The preliminary list of highways issues which Kentmere submitted is attached.

Libraries.

It was agreed that any organised response to the consultation process concerning proposals for change to the County's library services would be left to parishes to determine for themselves.

Broadband.

Although little progress could be reported, the need for greater transparency of the multitude of organisations involved was agreed by all; another two (CALC & ECCBF) having appeared recently. On a more positive note it was thought that the monies available may turn out to be greater for rural areas than had been thought but it was still necessary to maintain a high pressure to stop the project being solely to satisfy CCC's own needs. To this end the LAP would try to find practical solutions which could be presented. The small committee (of which Jackie Bettess is a member) is making some progress and developing a voice by attending as many meetings as possible. It will take some time to achieve anything due to the bureaucratic, financial and technological complexity of the problem.

Priorities.

A lengthy interactive and facilitated discussion took place to try to determine the priorities for LAP actions for the current financial year based on the parish's individual priorities. A greater clarity of purpose for the LAP appeared to emerge from this exercise.

The two issues which received the most votes (almost unanimous) were Highways and Broad band. The nature of these issues, however, was agreed to be more a matter of unified lobbying than actual spend, the capital sums being very large. Some items however were still within the current budget such as salt bins and gritters. Of the seven salt bins requested by Kentmere, four are likely to be provided from last years budget and the remainder will be carried over. The locations had been approved.

Kentmere Parish Meeting

Notes on Upper Kent Local Area Partnership Meeting 13 June 2011

The budget from SLDC for the UKLAP was outlined (approximately £11,000) for next year, but no figure would be available from CCC until late July. It was assumed this could be zero. The priorities for the LAP thus moved to other areas where spend could be productive. Highest in this category were items under Community Infrastructure. The effect of the Localism Bill, particularly in respect of Planning and Parish Plans was also identified as a priority issue where seminars were needed. Although the impact of the Bill was more in the future, preparedness was needed sooner.

Due to the Kentmere Parish Meeting being out of step with the LAP meeting it was necessary to engage with the UK LAP before any proper consultation within Kentmere could be achieved; a preliminary set of priorities were thus sent (see attached). **There is now an urgency within Kentmere electors to consider an agreed list so that proper representation of the Parish Meeting can be achieved at the LAP meetings.**

The next meeting

To be arranged so that Keith Masser will be in attendance, but targeted to be towards the end of August.

Iain Johnston
Jackie Bettess
Robert Courtier

The following is a report to the UKLAP for meeting of 13 June 2011 of highways issues in Kentmere Parish

General

In common with our neighbouring parish, Staveley with Ings, the principle problem is communications. There have been many changes in strategy and organisation within the highway authorities over the last few years leading to unsatisfactory lines of communications. Communications need to be two-way so that the community understands why and when certain works have been prioritised by those carrying the work out; some quite significant works have been carried out without any prior warning or consultation. Generally there has been no visible or coherent work plan by those engaged in maintenance, although some work has been carried out within a reasonable response time when reacting to specific 'hot spot' issue.

The parish is well aware of the limited funds available for maintenance works. Such limited expenditure as is available would be best spent not on *ad hoc* temporary measures but on a more technical basis of repair addressing underlying causes within a clear priority list. It cannot be economic to mobilise a crew from some remote depot to simply make a few temporary patches and then return to base, only for these patches to fail due to sub-grade saturation in a matter of weeks and sometimes only days.

The need for a better understanding of the highways authority's position - for example the relative importance between safety issues, maintenance of assets, obstruction of traffic flow (including snow clearance) and strategic improvements - leads us to conclude that a specific list of issues is premature at this time. A general list is thus provided to assist communications.

General list of highways issues.

1. **Safety** (all causes of minor accidents)
 - i) Improvement of surfaces at blind bends
 - ii) Improvement of signage on steep descents with blind bends (particularly aimed at 'hell-fire' cyclists)
 - iii) Removal of tree growth adjacent to highways where blind bends/pinch points occur.
 - iv) Consideration of local signage where road width less than 3.0m at blind bends
2. **Maintenance**
 - i) Clearance of blocked/collapsed drains under the road, not simply the gullies and gravel traps feeding them
 - ii) Treatment of sub-grades beneath pot-holes and longitudinal cracking, not simple 'hole filling'.
 - iii) Surface dressing where binder and friction wearing course have been lost.
3. **Obstruction of traffic**
 - i) Signage to discourage parking in passing places (including replacement signs where these have been vandalised/removed).
 - ii) Snow and ice clearance.
4. **Strategic improvements**
 - i) Repairs to Scroggs Bridge (strictly Staveley, but in the dominant interests of Kentmere residents).
 - ii) Stabilisation of boundary walls.

1. Kentmere Parish Meeting has recently changed its Chairman and is embarking on a more structured way of considering the needs of its electors at the parochial level. The issues listed below must therefore be considered preliminary.
2. The list is not capable of meaningful prioritisation as the issues are independent. Nevertheless some sense of importance may be construed from the ranking below.

i) **Highways.** A list of issues has been forwarded to the UKLAP administration.

The habitation of Kentmere is a cul-de-sac with its only means of transport communication by the 4½-mile single-track road from Staveley; there are no practical alternative routes, thus making this single corridor effectively its lifeline. Ensuring that this route is safe and un-obstructed all year round is therefore of vital interest to the community. Great strain is put on this road by the unsympathetic driving standards of visitors, HGVs to the factory of Hollingsworth & Vose and indiscriminate parking in passing places. Poor road maintenance, particularly of drainage, exacerbates these problems.

The key problem is communications with the County highways activities. Much has changed since the booklet *Cumbria Highways – The Rough Guide* was published in 2008 including the disbanding of the Highwayman scheme and by the end of 2011 two of the three organisations in partnership with the County. There is a significant lack of clarity about the future structure and how the Parish should interact with it.

ii) **Broadband.** The valley has poor electronic communication and borders on being a ‘not spot’ for broadband coverage. To remedy this is a priority objective.

iii) **Facilities.** The isolated location of the habitation of Kentmere at the end of a road makes the preservation of facilities an important aspect of rural life. Kentmere has no public transport, no school, no shops, virtually no local employment, no medical facilities, and no banking facilities. The residents are dependent on Staveley, Kendal and Windermere with 10 mile to 20 mile round trips by personal transport for these services.

Virtually all the residents are farmers, home workers and the retired, and do not commute. They are therefore are forced to travel widely to seek facilities. The more elderly and particularly the less mobile residents have no ability to do this and rely on neighbourliness. Thus the Post Office, Library services, and local polling station are essential facilities; having a bus pass is of no value if there is no bus service. Retention of at least these remaining facilities under pressure is a continuing objective, and of concern.

iv) **The Localism Bill.** The Bill will create opportunities for the future involvement of the community, particularly with Planning Consents and Village Plans. There is a need to understand the impact of this Bill before it receives assent so that the Parish can take appropriate measures in readiness. It would seem CCC and SLDC could do more to engage with LAP member Parishes, many of which do not have Parish Councils.

v) **Sustainability.** Most of the housing stock is poorly insulated by virtue of its construction type and age - heavy dry stone wall construction, cramped roof voids and non-structural ground flooring pose particular problems in a cold wet and windy environment. Much could be done to assist with solutions to these particular problems on a countywide basis, as costs of fossil fuels continue to increase disproportionately to incomes and pensions.