

Kirkby Lonsdale and District Civic Society: Chairman's report for 2018

After the major changes to the committee in 2017 this year saw no changes other than the two members co-opted in 2017 becoming elected members. At four officers and six members we were however two short of constitutional, and perhaps ideal, full strength.

Membership was 225, down from 250 in 2017. Of the 30 not renewed, 20 were for unknown reasons. We do check if members wish to renew, but we do not ask for reasons if not, useful though that might be. The average attendance at the seven winter talks reflected this, down from 75 to 70. This was still pleasing and reflected the quality and variety of the talks in Peter Stockdale's last season and Margaret Bunch's first.

However the quality of the Hall sound system was less pleasing, with intermittent problems all year. We think that with much testing, support from the Hall committee and increased experience we have overcome these. We will now look at whether we can improve the images projected during talks as with the larger audiences it can be difficult seeing towards the back. However it is unlikely that any significant investment will be made in the Hall at least until the consultation about its future is completed.

We were invited to contribute to that consultation and did so, and also to the project looking at how the Kirkby churches and their associated buildings might be used for the benefit of the whole community, and to the Vault project. We suggested Jonty Wilson as a lively subject for one of the short films, and John Hamlett kindly wrote a script for us. We also started a small project to replace the shabby plaque marking Jonty's Smithy on Fairbank with a larger, more informative one, in the style of our other plaques around the town.

A much larger project is reaching a key stage, the 'Kirkby Lonsdale Archive' website. This was initiated when we and the Christopher Robins Charitable Trust simultaneously became concerned about the possible loss of the stories, images and documents which form Kirkby's heritage. John Short from the Trust and David Pelter from the Society managed the project, with the Trust generously funding the development and initial loading of the website. It will be launched shortly and a group of volunteers will be adding to it, starting with our own archives, but we hope accessing local family archives.

We applied for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to fund John Hamlett making his second 'Remembering Kirkby Lonsdale' film, 'A Market Town In Wartime', but were unsuccessful. However we and John will be exploring other options. Meanwhile the first film was shown several more times locally and is available on DVD for members to borrow for viewing by family and friends.

A regular and key activity was reviewing planning applications across the Rainbow Parish and the planning sub-committee considered 90, 65 for South Lakeland and 25 for Yorkshire Dales. Having agreed to take forward only those of particular interest, the full committee considered 40 and responded to 12, objecting to eight, for reasons of design, location or over-development; suggesting improvements for two, both actioned, though we will maybe not take full credit; and supporting one for good design and one for improved design. These numbers were similar to the previous three years.

Last year we were concerned about the impact of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but applying 'legitimate interest' simplified our compliance. This means that having joined the Society you would probably expect us to contact you occasionally. So we hope you were comfortable with how; how often; and about what we contacted you, but if not just ask us to change it.

Looking forward, we would welcome ideas for, and help with, activities and projects of any size which reflect our aims; we are in a sound financial position to fund these. Meanwhile I would like thank you all, and especially the committee, for supporting the Society this year.

Anne Burgess

Chairman

March 2019

Appendix A

Extract from the current Constitution, approved at the AGM on 12th March 2018

The Society exists for the public benefit for the following purposes:

- a) To protect and preserve and stimulate public interest in the area comprising the civil parishes of Kirkby Lonsdale, Barbon, Casterton, Hutton Roof, Lupton, Mansergh and Middleton which area is hereinafter referred to as 'the area of benefit'.
- b) To promote high standards of town planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit.
- c) To inform the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area of benefit.
- d) To secure the preservation, conservation, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area of benefit.

Appendix B

Summary of talks held in 2018

Monday 15th January

Fake Or Fortune: The painting in St John the Baptist, Tunstall

Mike Winstanley

Monday 12th February

Woodland Crafts and Industries

Andy Lowe

Monday 12th March

The Matchless Disaster of 1894: Morecambe Bay's worst boating accident

Simon Williams

Monday 10th September 2018

The Old Yards of Kendal: An oral history

Peter Holme

Monday 8th October 2018

Carus Wilson and the Poor Laws

Stuart Newstead

Monday 12th November 2018

The Darker Side of Cumbria

Rob David

Monday 10th December 2018

Liverpool Cowkeepers: A family history

David Joy