

Chairman's Report May 2025 to 2026

Following the Parish Council Meeting, May 2025, a number of issues remained to be resolved. The Sustrans scheme to run a cycle track through Cowan Bridge remained on hold until the autumn when we received an update from the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (previously Sustrans) informing us that although they remained committed to the vision of a Greenway from Lancaster to Kirkby Lonsdale and Ingleton, they will not be "actively progressing work or engaging further on the northern sections....." Their attention is to be diverted to stretches from Bullbeck to Hornby and Wray.

Having agreed that the red telephone box in Ireby should be preserved in situ and used to house a defibrillator, it was decided to make provision for the financing of the project in the Precept upon Lancaster City Council for 2026/ 2027. We are now engaged in the process of taking this forward but have so far failed to secure grant funding. Hopefully the London Hearts Charity will provide some financial support but the costs involved have made an increase in the Precept inevitable. This will however be a one-off increase designed for this specific project. A WhatsApp Group has been set up in Ireby on the initiative of Geoff Eales, a resident of the village and a qualified First Responder, who has joined Councillors in discussion of this item and is helping to take it forward.

Since the collapse of the Parish Council notice board in Ireby, we have been looking into the costs of a replacement. A board smaller than but similar to that in Cowan Bridge would cost around £500 but a hard wood board, which would be more aesthetically pleasing, would be far more expensive. Councillor Chick is continuing to enquire regarding costs of a wooden replacement.

The Parish Council website has been up graded in compliance with new regulations and all Councillors have been given new email addresses. Personally I find this updating confusing, time wasting and irritating. It means that one has to remember to check two separate icons to access one's emails and get used to a separate format, not helpful to an online novice like myself but we appreciate and are grateful for the support given by Andrew at A2A and our Parish Clerk Kevin Price during this upgrade.

We continue to maintain the Memorial Garden in Cowan Bridge and the Greens in Ireby and to contribute to the upkeep of the Churchyard in Leck. We are contributing to the ongoing costs of the Fraser Hall defibrillator and the equipment relating to the Emergency Plan has been updated.

Lancaster City Councillor Ross Hunter continues to update the Parish Council on LCC matters. We welcome his ongoing support and that of Councillor Crimmins.

Unfortunately the latest Parish Council Forum organised by the YDNPA was recently cancelled due to inadequate support by the Councils involved. As the cancellation was left

very late, Councillors Howard and Makinson, whose names had been submitted but not recorded, made an unproductive journey to Barbon only to find an empty car park.

A new Chairman will need to be appointed in May. I have thoroughly enjoyed my watch over the past 14 years, having been elected to the Council in 2012, taking the Chair the following May but it is time now to retire gracefully and pass the baton on to another member of the team. I would like to record my final thanks to all of you for your constant and reliable support and encouragement. It has been a pleasure to work with you. I will of course continue to serve as Councillor until the next election.