

LEVENS PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER - WINTER 2025

Please note that in the following articles, references to Levens Parish Council and Westmorland and Furness Council may frequently be shortened to the PC or W&FC respectively.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Welcome to this edition of the Parish Council Newsletter. It is four months since our last issue and time to bring us all up to date.

Traffic management in the village is a regular item on our agenda and since our last Newsletter the results of the 20mph limit consultation have been released by the Westmorland and Furness Council. The response rate was over 50% and as about three quarters of those were in favour of a 20mph limit in our village, W&FC have commenced legal processes to bring this about.

A review of the effects of the trial No Parking cones placed by the Playing Fields earlier this year has been undertaken with the result that a white line will be put on the road at that location. We are grateful for a £500 donation from W&F Councillor Janet Battye's Locality allowance to cover most of the cost. The proposed footpath down Levens Lane will shortly receive further consideration by W&FC.

The defibrillator on the wall of the Levens Institute is life expired and the Levens Charity will pay for a replacement unit to be located in the centre of the village.

The Levens Community Project continues to make progress with a water supply to the proposed properties at Underhill having been installed. Preparations for the electric supply are to be made in the near future.

It is a legal requirement for dogs to be kept on lead on roads within 30mph speed limits. This really means all dogs should be on leads on all village roads. If you love your dog, please keep it on a lead.

'Hot off the Press' news is that the Christmas Tree Lights Switch On will take place at 5pm on Sunday 30th November. Log it now and posters etc will appear near the time.

Finally, this is the last Newsletter of 2025 and so I conclude with an early 'Seasons Greetings' and we are always pleased to hear any thoughts you may have about our village.

Roger Atfield - Chair, Levens Parish Council

CORONATION COMMUNITY ORCHARD AND THE BRIGSTEER ROAD PICNIC SITE

Following the detailed report in the last Newsletter, we are pleased to update Parishioners with the news that plans are in hand for the completion of the Community Orchard at Underhill during the winter. At the time of writing, the outcome of an application to rebuild the roadside boundary wall is awaited.

At the Brigsteer Road site, it is hoped that the proposed information board will soon be in place.

TRAFFIC SCHEMES

The management of traffic within the village and further afield is a constant priority for your Parish Council and there are several schemes on the go at present:

Traffic Management in the Village: Following the temporary scheme in the vicinity of the Playing Fields Gates, W&FC has confirmed its consent for a white line to restrict parking and thereby improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety at the narrow point of the road. The PC is grateful to Cllr. Janet Battye for a contribution of £500 from her Locality Grant budget towards the total cost of £650.

Levens Lane Footpath: Following the feasibility study, this project is currently on the list as a candidate for funding from a W&FC Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund.

The 20-m.p.h. zone: In our last Newsletter we reported on the initial 20-m.p.h. consultation which ran from 04 June to 18 July. In his opening comments, the Chairman confirmed that the results of the have been released by Westmorland and Furness Council. The response rate was over 50% with about three quarters of those in favour of a 20mph limit in our village. As a result, W&FC have commenced the next stage of the process to implement the scheme. This will involve a statutory consultation and formal advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Order.

DEFIBRILLATOR

Our Village “Defibrillator Manager/Monitoring Officer” (Hairdresser Linda! - thank you!) has advised us that our current defibrillator is very near the end of its serviceable life. We have had it upgraded twice, with new pads and batteries etc., but nothing more can now be done to keep it in service.

You may remember that this original defibrillator was donated to the community by local residents John and Sheila Watson and has been a life-saving facility in the past. Linda has helped us identify a new, updated defibrillator - a model which is recommended by the British Heart Foundation. It is very simple to use, has voice activation and includes “Intellisense” automation. We will buy specific “child pads” to facilitate use on children aged 1 year upwards. Without these pads, it could only be used on children of 8 years old and upwards (as is the case with most defibrillators). At a recent Parish Council meeting and acting in its capacity as Sole Trustee of the Levens Charity, the PC agreed that new equipment, as well as a new storage box, should be funded by the Charity. The cost, excluding VAT, will be in the region of £1,675. The PC is exploring possible new sites in the village which are centrally located, easily visible, accessible, with electricity and shelter if possible.

The Village will be kept informed of developments towards achieving all this.



Basic CPR Lifeskills – Could You Save a Life?



As part of the Levens Emergency Action Plan (LEAP), Levens Parish Council is pleased to share an opportunity for residents to learn basic CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) – a vital life skill that could help you save someone in an emergency.

This short, certified practical session will cover:

- How to recognise cardiac arrest and respond quickly
- Performing hands-only CPR safely and effectively

This is a **free community session**, with no previous training required. It's a great way to build confidence and be ready to act when every second counts. The dates will be posted on the Levens website soon with sessions being available in the new year, so watch this space!

Let's make Levens a village of lifesavers!

LEVENS COMMUNITY PROJECT

Further work on retaining walls for the new village hall has been completed recently and the sale of stone from the site continues. In previous issues, we have reported that, for reasons largely beyond the control of the Project, the build costs for both the hall and the affordable houses had risen exponentially since the pandemic and the geopolitical uncertainties that have followed it – and which are still with us today. We also reported that one of the companies approached in the tender process has come back with very positive indications that, by adopting engineering modifications and specification adjustments, the village hall can be brought in within the funds currently raised by and available to the Project. The Project continues to work hard with designers and structural engineers to confirm what modifications will be acceptable within the footprint of the current design.

On the construction phase of the affordable homes, most of the groundwork at Underhill has now been completed. The Environment Agency has issued the necessary permit for works to enable the trench for the duct for the electricity supply to be dug.

The Project is looking again at funding for the affordable homes. So far, it has contributed a significant amount of match funding through enhancement of the value of the land at Underhill by gaining planning consent and by investing a considerable amount of quantifiable voluntary management time. Funding secured for the affordables amounts to over half a million pounds, but the Project will need to raise additional resources to be able to build both the homes at Underhill and on the old Village Institute site. The loss of Community Led Funding for the new Village Hall has impacted this element of the Project, as gaining that would have released the anticipated contribution to the affordable home element.

The Project is applying for a grant under the W&F Affordable Homes Grant scheme and remains in discussion about the current position with the Housing Development Officer at W&FC.

THE LEVENS VILLAGE CHRISTMAS TREE.....is ordered and coming!

An update from Cllr. Helen Burrow and the Christmas Team: Paul, Michael, Kevin, James & Dave. David and James Burrow will transport and deliver the tree to site, free, as usual. Helen and the Team will erect the tree, with extra helpers (thank you in advance!) add lights, decorations - shiny balls and a few extra-large bows, all ready for.....

THE SWITCH ON - SUNDAY NOV. 30th at 5.00 p.m.

The much-appreciated attractions will be in attendance - music, including a few carols from our local youngsters (Levens Warblers and Levens Little Larks will be present) - and the usual food and drinks stalls will be there too. Contribute to the atmosphere - bring your own battery tea lights in jars, or lanterns, or torches with you!

Our Village Christmas Tree switch-on is an uplifting event that is now renowned and something of which we can all be very proud - especially during the dark days to come! A huge amount of work goes into the tree behind the scenes, all from volunteers. Tremendous thanks are due to all who help, as well as you who give and contribute! The Just Giving page will open nearer the time, for online donations and details will follow on the noticeboard. Cash donations can also be given at Levens Village Shop as usual too.

Please come, join in, enjoy and support our efforts – and thank you for your backing!

DOG-FOULING - an update from Cllr. Kevin Holmes

Regrettably, dog fouling in the Parish remains an issue that we hear about constantly.

In response to your concerns, Cllrs Burrow, Battye and I met with the Westmorland and Furness Dog Warden within the Parish Boundaries on 16th July to look into this problem. He informed us that he would be putting up signs to warn the public to pick up after their dogs and either take the poo bags home or place them in a litter bin.

He has now started to put some signs up within the Parish including on road verges and footpaths. Picking up is equally important on footpaths across agricultural land - dog faeces can carry Neosporosis eggs which if left on the ground may infect cattle and cause pregnant cows to have a still-born calf or to abort before their due date.

It is illegal to fail to pick up and dispose correctly after your dog. If caught and reported to the dog warden with evidence, you would receive a fine of £100 for each offence.

Most responsible owners do the right thing and clean up after their dogs, but unfortunately there are still some that don't.

Information is on the Parish Noticeboard with a Westmorland and Furness A5 leaflet entitled 'Please Help.' You can report cases that you witness directly to the Dog Warden at the Council. The contact number is 0300 373 3300.

MISCELLANY

Annual Accounts: The Annual Return (AGAR) for 2024-25 has been signed-off by the External Auditor and may be viewed at <https://www.levens.org.uk/parish-council/parish-council-finances>.

Greening Levens: The local environmental group will host an update session on the Curlew Recovery Programme to be held on 10 November. Details from Cllr. Janet Battye.

Digital and Data Compliance: New provisions are being introduced with which local authorities, including the PC, must comply. Amongst other things, this will mean that email addresses for the PC and Councillors must be consistent and in an acceptable form (e.g. ending in .org.uk). The website will be checked for accessibility and new policies will be prepared for Information Technology and Freedom of Information.

Matters from W&FC:

- **Devolution:** Cumberland and W&FC have approved the Government's devolution proposals to establish a new, Mayor-led authority. This will not replace services currently provided by the Unitary Authorities but will have powers on strategic matters such as transport, energy and defence. The new Authority will be established in 2026 with Mayoral elections in May 2027.
- **The Community Governance Review (CGR):** A CGR will consider whether parish boundaries are fit for purpose, and other matters (e.g. name, possible mergers etc). A public consultation will run until 08 December 2025.
- **Parking Review:** A review to harmonise the provision of parking throughout W&F continues.
- **The Local Plan:** Development of the new plan as reported in the previous issue continues.

Levens Parish Council 2025-26

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Councillor: Westmorland and Furness Council: Cllr. Janet Battye, Inglewood, Cinderbarrow, Levens LA8 8NX. Mob: 07711 583013. Email: janetmbattye@gmail.com

Police: PCSO 5233 Jayne Park. Email: jayne.park@cumbria.police.uk

Parish Council Meetings 2025-26

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of most months in the Methodist Church Meeting Room commencing at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated / notified. Matters relating to Parish Council meetings including Agendas and Minutes are posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard and on its webpage: <https://www.levens.org.uk/parish-council>. All are welcome to attend and there is an item for public participation on every Agenda.

The following dates are scheduled for meetings during the 2025-26 Parish Council year:

2025: 11 November

2026: 13 January; 10 February; 10 March; 14 April.

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place (provisionally) on the 17 March 2026 at 7.30pm in the Village Institute/Hall.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on the 12 May 2026.

Levens Village Community Website

For other sources of local information do please visit the village website at: www.levens.org.uk, where you will find material on a wide range of local activities. If you haven't been there, it really is worth checking out. One page (<https://www.levens.org.uk/parish-council>) is devoted to the activities of the Parish Council where the minutes of its meetings, information on finance and much more is to be found - including a Contact facility enabling the reader to get in touch direct with the Council.

There is also a local Facebook Group where items of local interest are discussed - just search for 'Levens Village Community'.