



Appleby in Westmorland • Root and Branch • May it Flourish Forever

NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER

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No 67

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 27 July 2006

Some 45 members and guests gathered in the Supper Room on a sweltering hot evening. The formalities were speedily dealt with. The Chairman's Report was given in the previous Newsletter and a copy of the Treasurer's Report (audited accounts) is included with this edition. In the Secretary's Report Vivienne gave a very brief review of the past year, drawing attention to the evening visit to the College and the successful series of talks. She outlined the Society's successes and failures, as well as the ongoing issues with which the Society is concerned. The annual apple count for Dorothy's Tree was given – a magnificent 84 – and she gave a welcome and thanks for volunteering to Anne Crosby and Marjorie Campion, our Refreshment Co-ordinators. She ended by expressing appreciation to Graham and with the comment that Dorothy had made a good decision and would have no complaints. After almost ten years in the chair, Graham took his leave and moved to the back benches. Our new Chairman is Ian Campbell, who has been a member of the Committee for almost two years. Brigadier John Heelis continues as our President and Lance Thwaytes our Vice President. Vivienne Gate was re-elected as Secretary and Olive Airey continues as Treasurer. As anticipated in the previous Newsletter, David Furniss retired from the Committee, after serving for many years, due to work commitments. Committee members are Anne Coles, Graham Coles, John Hodge, Davina Osman and Rosemary Spence.

Graham and Vivienne paid tribute to the valuable contribution made by David Furniss over the years and hoped that we could still call on his local knowledge in the future. Alice Palmer kindly said a few words of thanks to the Committee.

Following the formalities, we were treated to a wonderful evening of entertainment by Jean Scott-Smith, Wendy Balmer and Robbie Ellis, members of the Lakeland Dialect Society, ably assisted by Graham. Jean, Wendy and Robbie sang songs and recited poems with a Westmorland theme and Graham accompanied the performances with appropriate slides. We were taken all over the county, past and present, with the words and pictures. The 'grand finale' was especially appreciated (particularly by your Secretary – an ex-Shap resident) as it was a song about the Horse Fair and was composed by Stanley Hudson, of Shap, for the choir of Shap Secondary School. When the travels were over, Jean drew out the names of the winners of the Westmorland quiz, which she had compiled. Our final treat was Society member, Michael Gregson, reciting "George's Cow" and a poem recalling his father and grandfather. It was an evening that was enjoyed by all and will be well-remembered by those lucky enough to have been there.

FROM THE (NEW) CHAIRMAN

It is a great honour and pleasure to be elected to serve as your Chairman, especially as the most many of you know of me is that I have a loud voice (essential for chairing). But I have lived in the Town for 6 years now and feel very protective about it, to the point where I want to be active in defending it against the many uses and abuses that threaten it. I realise that we cannot actively DO an awful lot in an executive sense (although I hope to try to do a bit about that), but we can act as an influence and a stimulant. I would like to try to work with Appleby Town Council, Appleby Alliance and the Chamber of Trade and Community Association to better the Town.

Naturally, I have some ideas about how I want the Society to progress, but they need to be discussed fully in Committee to find out what will run and what won't.

Talking of the Committee, I regret that David Furniss found it impossible to continue as our Vice-Chairman, but I fully understand his reasons for standing down, and we are very grateful for his efforts. I consider it a coup to have got Graham and Anne as Committee members. The Society would be unthinkable without Graham's assiduity in maintaining and assembling the archives, his memory about recent events in the Town and his meticulous surveillance of procedures of Councils and their members. We differ slightly on tactics in this latter role but we hope he will be our correspondent in the good old-fashioned sense, with a "Current Affairs" column, so you will be able to read his polemics, as well as his informative historical material, in the Newsletters. Anne has assembled countless exhibitions, but I trust that she will not just be a putter-together of such displays but an active member in all aspects of Committee debates.

Traffic!!

Is it my imagination, or is the Town getting more and more crowded and dangerous to drive in? I really HATE taking the car into and through the centre. I did "Meals on Wheels" today and it took HOURS, with some intricately chancy and basically illegal manoeuvring. It seems to me that Appleby is totally lawless when it comes to traffic. Parking is a matter of abandoning your car as near as possible to your destination so you don't have to walk any distance – well otherwise you wouldn't have used the car in the first place, would you? Is there a Health and Safety rule that states that delivery drivers can stop only exactly outside the front door of their destination and to hell with the inconvenience caused? There are hundreds of disabled people in Appleby – if you look at the parking lots! Many vans and cars are classed as busses! Freight traffic of any size groans obstructively down Bridge Street and Boroughgate with no attention paid to weight limits. (Have you noticed that that weight limit has sneakily increased to 18 tonnes since the enhancement?). Driving (and reversing) is certainly done without due care and attention. Are the humps pedestrian crossings or not? Nobody ever gets caught on Battlebarrow for screeching past at XXX hundred miles an hour on motorbikes, tractors, milk wagons, quadbikes or whatever, probably chatting on the mobile phone the while. It is considered quite law-abiding if you break the law but put your hazard lights on to "make it all right"! Since the police seem to have abjured all responsibility for traffic control within the Town, it seems to me that, once idiotic mistakes and omissions from the signage are rectified, the Town deserves and might get a sharp dose of Traffic Warden syndrome – my, that will be popular!

A Further Regional Body – Or Is It the Same?

In the course of my dedicated researches on your behalf, I came across yet ANOTHER regional body that governs us. This is *The North West Regional Board*. It is NOT the NWR Assembly, NOT the NWR Development Agency, NOT the Government Office NW. It is a shiny Board all on its own. And the publicity boasts that it will influence £745 million regional spending!

I do not want to go into its remit in any detail – it can be found on the web – but it seems that this Board will monitor much of the work of the NWR Assembly. There is a lot of do-gooding clap-trap on the website, mostly meaningless. But, it finishes up saying that NWR Assembly will monitor the work of the Board – so they monitor each other’s work! Isn’t that fun and cosy?! What makes it better still is that the personnel (NOT elected to these posts, remember) are, in many cases, **THE SAME PEOPLE**. So they go monitor, monitor all over the place LOOKING AT THEMSELVES! On fat allowances. Isn’t our democracy wonderful?

MOANING MINNIE or GRATEFUL GLADYS? (contribution from Maggie Clowes)

I don’t want to be the only grumpy old person in Appleby – won’t you join me? It is very easy, in the face of bureaucracy, to sit back and think, “What good can one person do?” But when enough people speak up the powers-that-be do take notice. Eden District Council have had second thoughts about their plan to save money by transferring the Penrith Museum and Penrith T.I.C. to Rheged. They had second thoughts because a lot of people protested.

So, don’t just grumble to your family and friends – pick up the phone, write a letter, send an e-mail. You could talk to your Town, District or County Councillor – one of the things they are there for is to pass on your concerns to whichever body they are on. (I think another should be to alert us, their constituents, to whatever the larger authority is planning which might affect us, but that doesn’t always seem to happen. Say exactly why you object to whatever it is and make certain you get an answer. You will probably have to be patient – response times can be slow. You can still wait for 19 working days (virtually a month) for a reply from Eden. However, things are looking up – EDC has set up a Contact Centre with courteous, efficient staff who will do their best to help you on the spot; if they can’t, they will put you through to someone who can. The contact number is 01768 817 817. In Appleby, if you have a problem, you can fill in a yellow form (obtainable from the T.I.C.) with the details – there have been some hiccups with this but work is in hand to improve it. The Mayor plans to start Councillor Surgeries in the autumn, when Councillors will be available to talk over your concerns.

Fair’s fair – complain when it is necessary but be generous with praise when things are done well. The flowers at St Lawrence this year were stunning – I rang up to say so and was saddened to hear the sigh of relief at the other end that this wasn’t another complaint.

This is our Town – let’s make the best it can be.

APPLEBY LIBRARY (contribution from Alice Palmer)

Comments on the new facilities, as invited

What a disappointment! The ‘WELCOME’ sign above the desk doesn’t compensate for the loss of our old spacious library. The new space is far too small and cramped, with little room to manoeuvre around the portable shelving, and the low ceiling makes it feel claustrophobic. The artificial lighting is poor compared with the large windows and the environmentally friendly natural light upstairs. In the old library it was easier to locate specific fiction as it was clearly, alphabetically labelled not any more. Specific areas of knowledge, too, were clearly classified with descriptive labels above. Now but few are indicated, with the rest in a miscellaneous section, entitled “Non Fiction”. When I criticised the arrangement, I was told, “This is how we have to do it now, but we are here to help.” Of course, they will do so willingly, as they always have done, but if only one person is on duty and busy checking books in and out at the tiny counter, how can they help. I commented on the much smaller stock and was told that they had disposed of a lot of books which hadn’t been borrowed for years. So now we have fewer, without the chance of serendipity, finding some surprise pleasure. In the past we had four large desks in the study area. Now there’s one about the size of a large card table with three chairs; hardly welcoming serious researchers or students needing to do homework, or indeed anyone else wishing to sit and browse or read a

magazine (I'm not sure if our library still has the latter). I noticed a room at the back, but was told this was to be let for meetings, not for people to use to work in the library. My criticism on opening day was met with, "But we've had old people in today who've not been in for years". That may be so, but I also noticed that infirm, elderly people are finding it difficult to see books on the bottom shelves - which are closer to the ground than in the old library. What has happened to the interesting and informative exhibition space we once had? The children's area, too, doesn't offer the same facilities as before. It will be interesting to see how the staff cope in the winter with the automatic door opening directly onto the street and the prevailing westerlies or the blustery Helm Wind whistling their way inside! I shall make use of what facilities there are but I don't find the new library an improvement, in fact, the reverse.

FROM THE (PREVIOUS) CHAIRMAN

Penrith Museum

Despite claims to the contrary made by one of our 'senior Councillors', the Society did respond to Eden District Council's consultation exercise before the deadline of 30 June. Members were informed via our previous Newsletter. Unfortunately time and space constraints made it impossible for us to report fully.

For the record, the Society pointed out:

- Penrith Museum is not the same as the District Council's museum service. Different considerations apply and they must not be confused.
- The only reason to relocate Penrith's museum would be that it is in the best interest of Penrithians. It is their museum and was there long before E.D.C.
- E.D.C.'s museum service will be registered with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Councillors must be aware of the national implications should they agree to end it.
- There is no evidence to suggest that the museum staff have been consulted. They are professionals and Councillors will surely wish to take their advice into account.
- Whilst E.D.C. has to be aware of cost, it cannot ignore its Policy Objectives, one of which is to prepare a museum development plan for the benefit of Eden.
- The Council has contracted out much of its work but still occupies two large buildings in Penrith. Could not the museum be relocated to one of them?
- There is a vacant local authority owned space in Appleby. Appleby is central to the Eden Valley and is in need of an all-weather/all year attraction. Whilst not suggesting that Penrith's museum should move to Appleby, the museum service and staff might.
- The Society is more than willing to co-operate with other organisations should E.D.C. determine to locate the museum service in Appleby.

Members who saw my letter in the Herald on 22 July will have read that the Town Council failed to communicate its views to E.D.C. before the close of the consultation period.

CURRENT AFFAIRS (subtitled GRAHAM'S GRUMBLES)

It is hoped that this item will be a regular feature in the Newsletter. Please note, the views expressed are mine and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society or of individual members.

Freedom of Information

Members with long memories will recall that Cllr Harland, then Mayor, undertook to investigate our complaints about access to information in January. At the annual Town meeting in April he gave a public assurance that Council staff had not been instructed to ignore the Freedom of Information Act but said he had been unable to complete his investigation. In June we wrote to the Town Clerk to remind her that the matter was still unresolved. We received 'sincere apologies'

from the Clerks. Our letter was passed to Cllr Harland who would reply either directly or via the Clerk. In July we received a letter from the Deputy Mayor telling us that she had seen the correspondence but, far from resolving anything, went on to say that accessing information in the Town Council archives will, in future, be even more difficult. The matter will be discussed at a future meeting of the Committee. In the circumstances, it seems very likely that the Information Commissioner will be invited to resume his investigation which he put 'on hold' pending Cllr Harland's promise to resolve matters informally.

Appleby New Fair

The Society 'sat in' on a meeting of the New Fair Joint Committee on 15 August. The main purpose of the meeting was to form working parties to deal with areas of concern e.g. traffic management and Health and Safety. There are others. It was agreed that the Society would be invited to become a permanent member of the Committee. The matter will be discussed at our next Committee meeting.

Appleby Town Council

It seems that the father of the Council may have opened Pandora's box when he wrote to the Herald to insist that Councils could hold meetings behind closed doors whenever they felt like it. Our Town Council held a closed meeting on 7 July. (They held others on 26 and 28 July and 11 August. Two more, scheduled for 2 and 4 August were cancelled.) Not surprisingly, the Town is awash with rumour and speculation. Whilst the Council can hold closed meetings in strictly defined circumstances, any decisions reached must be minuted and the media must be notified of those decisions. That's how we, the public, find out. But, when the Herald tried to find out about the 7 July meeting, it was told that **no decisions had been reached**.

I sat in on a Council meeting on 12 July. It was the worst Council meeting and probably the worst meeting of any kind that I have endured. When Cllr Budding, the Responsible Finance Officer, got to his feet he began by telling Councillors that the meeting on 7 July **had decided that**, in future, sick pay would be paid at the statutory minimum. Two surprises in one sentence. Firstly, the closed meeting had obviously made **at least one decision** so what the Herald was told was misleading. Secondly, we are entitled to presume that the Council has been spending more than it needed to do in the past.

Before he could tell us more, Cllr Langan sprang to her feet to demand that the rest of what he intended to say about the 'secret' meeting should be deferred until Part 2 of the meeting. Search the agenda as I might, there was no Part 2 so, where did this come from? Just how many meetings do they hold in the darkness of the Moot Hall?

Having told us that the Council has been wasting our money, the R.F.O. moved quickly on. He told the meeting that last year's deficit of £14,000 could reduce to £6,000 by the financial year end. However, he kept learning of more new problems. For example, he had just been told that the public hall roof leaked. For the record, there has been a bucket under a leaking roof 'back stage' for well over a year. (There is a sign next to the bucket urging users of the room to put the bucket back in the same spot when they leave!) He also reported that the Moot Hall telephone system requires urgent modernisation - the Society wrote to the Town Clerk in September 2005 telling her just that!

His best guess is that the Town will run out of money by early December. Our additional £10,000 precept, most of which went on staff wages, will have been spent and our Christmas present from the Town Council will be an even higher bill next year.

Because of the financial situation, there was an urgent need to hold a Special Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting in August – this Committee does not meet in August – and the

meeting would have to take decisions which might not be left until September. Could the F and G P Committee have delegated powers to authorise expenditure? You could hear the intake of breath. All eyes turned to the Town Clerk who, by law, has the duty to advise and guide Councillors on matters of procedure. Councillors might as well have looked up for divine inspiration. On the first of three separate occasions that evening she said she would defer to the wisdom of a 'senior Councillor'. As is customary on these occasions, a 'senior Councillor' mumbled something which few could follow or understand. All was well. Move on. There is nothing wrong if an inexperienced Town Clerk adjourns a meeting for a few minutes whilst she finds out what the rules actually are. As very few Town Councillors had copies of Standing Orders, everyone might learn something if she did her job properly.

Undesirable and undignified

The above heading is taken from those very same Standing Orders. I can fully understand why 'senior Councillors' might not want their junior colleagues to have a copy. Much easier if a senior Councillor makes up a new rule of procedure on the night. It matters not if the rule changes at the next meeting. What matters is that the 'senior Councillors' retain control.

At the meeting on 12 July a Councillor dared to propose that the names of Councillors present at meetings should be recorded in alphabetical order. To many, this will seem like a minor procedural point – a storm in a teacup, perhaps. In the context of the huge problems facing our Council, I agree. But someone has to find a way of breaking the stranglehold by insisting that all Councillors are equal in law and in the eyes of the electorate. There were three 'senior Councillors' present. Each stood to explain how and why the Council's traditions were sacrosanct. In the case of names, whilst most Councils recorded names in alphabetical order, Appleby had never done so and never should.

Just two short years ago, in July 2004, the names of Councillors attending a meeting were recorded in alphabetical order. The insistence on putting them in order of seniority originates from a November evening in 2005 when Cllr Langan raised the point after a Council meeting had closed. There was no debate but the 'resolution' was agreed and minuted accordingly.

As it happened, all was well. Councillors voted 5 to 4 in favour of a change. The Deputy Mayor declared the motion carried, then said, "Sadly, we are going alphabetically." Nothing could have been clearer. Not to be outdone, Cllr Langan, without rising from her seat as is 'traditional', reminded the Deputy Mayor that she (the Deputy Mayor) had not voted. "Can I vote now?", asked the Deputy Mayor. The Town Clerk had no idea and deferred to the Father of the Council, who said of course she could. So, after the motion had been voted on and a result declared, the Deputy Mayor cast her vote against the motion. This was quickly followed by her casting vote and the motion was lost.

The Council's Standing Orders state that the Chairman does not have to vote at the same time as the other Councillors but goes on to say, "It is obviously undesirable and undignified" if the Chairman delays a vote and then uses two votes to overturn a motion which would have succeeded otherwise. But Standing Orders do not give the chairman the right to use two votes AFTER a motion is voted on and a result declared. That's not just undesirable and undignified; that is possibly illegal. But it is Appleby Town council and the rules don't apply.

"Undesirable and undignified" are polite words for what happened that evening. Gut wrenchingly awful might be a better description.

Another attempted rebellion

That was not the only attempted rebellion that same evening. The Council was in trouble even before the meeting began. There was no Mace Bearer. How on earth could they have a meeting without the mace being carried in and out of the Council Chamber? The answer was obvious – instruct a ‘junior Councillor’ to deputise as Mace Bearer. Rather than have no meeting, this very clear break from a centuries old tradition was effected. There was a slight problem. Tradition requires the mace to be removed from the Chamber. But the Councillor deputising for the Mace Bearer declined to leave the Chamber with the mace as he was, after all, an elected member and had a right to remain at the meeting. A brand new tradition was born. It is now in order for a Councillor to stand quietly in a corner of the room holding the mace whilst the Council is adjourned and then pop it back on the table before taking his seat. Funny? It would be if it was free. But our Town Council does not come cheap. It is fast becoming a very expensive farce. Can we not persuade the Council to adopt a structured, business-like procedure for routine meetings with the “macery” kept only for ceremonial occasions.

What if?

A few months ago, the residents of Marlow discovered a little used clause in the Local Government Act which states that, if 10 residents sign a motion, a parish council must hold a referendum on whatever the issue was that was causing concern. Suppose ten of us call for a referendum on whether Appleby needs a parish council. I wonder what the outcome would be?

Tradition

To listen to some of our Councillors, especially those who declared on the importance of tradition on 12 July, one might think our Councillors had been wearing hats and gowns for ‘ever’. Had they bothered to glance at the photographs of past Mayors which line the walls of the Moot Hall, they would have known better.

Prior to 1938 Appleby’s Councillors wore top hat and tails on ‘state occasions’. Most often they appeared in lounge suits, even when ‘on parade’. An Appleby Mayor who attended a gathering of civic dignitaries during Coronation year (1937) was described by *The Herald* as a “dull brown sparrow” when compared with his more sartorial colleagues from across two counties.

Given the entrenched opposition to change, there must have been hell to pay when Councillors discussed a proposal to adopt hats and gowns in late 1937. But the decision to make this major change was unanimous. The selection of a new Mayor for 1938 was also unanimous, even though it was known that he would spend very little time in Appleby and that he had not been on the Council before.

When Cllr Richardson proposed a new Mayor he said that there were several precedents for going outside the Council and, “It is a good thing to appoint outsiders of outstanding attainment, character and influence even though he or she had not served on the Council.” Now there’s a tradition to contemplate! Just who was the new Mayor and who was it that revolutionised the Council’s dress code?

The Mayor was Major the Right Hon. John Sackville Richard Baron Hothfield and it was he who offered to dress the Council in the manner to which he was accustomed. The retiring Mayor was grateful. No longer would he be a drab brown sparrow. Henceforth, due to the generosity of Lord Hothfield, he would become a bird of paradise.

By 1979, the ‘fancy hats and floaty gowns’, as they were once described, were looking threadbare. The Mayor bemoaned the fact that his sable-trimmed red robe was held together with rusty safety pins and the gold wire was coming out of his hat. The gowns and hats of his colleagues were in a similar poor state. he proposed to write a number of letters to lovers of Westmorland seeking

financial contributions towards the cost of repairs. History does not record the outcome but, if anyone can tell us what happened, we will be pleased to be informed.

Just in case the above description prompts another bid for money, the trim on the Mayor's robe and on those of his 'senior colleagues', formerly Aldermen – a post abolished in 1974 – is not sable, it is musquash. Musquash comes from the muskrat, a North American rodent. Sable is a different and far more expensive matter.

Whatever repairs were carried out in 1979, they lasted only until 2000, when Cllr Langan told the Council that the Mayor's blue robe had faded. (It must have faded considerably if it was transformed from red to blue.) In December of that year she was concerned to read that only £1,500 had been included in the budget for the replacement of robes. By then it was agreed that they all needed to be renewed. £1,500 was nowhere near enough, she claimed. Each gown would cost about £400 and each hat a further £100. The estimates had come from a London costumier. Cllr Wilson objected, claiming that there were people in Appleby quite capable of carrying out running repairs. The rest of the debate was in private as the public was excluded. I know – I was there. The work went to Appleby.

So there you have it. Had some of our Councillors got their way, we would have spent £8,000 on new hats and gowns only five years ago. The Cloisters is in need of urgent repair. The Moot Hall's electrical wiring is dangerous (see Town Clerk's financial report December 2005). The Public Hall requires expensive repairs. The Council will run out of money before the year end.

Question: Can Appleby afford to continue the tradition of hats and gowns?

And what of the Town Clerk's wig? Least said about that the better. As the caption accompanying the photograph clearly states, the wig denotes someone who is legally qualified as, indeed, clerks of old were. The Town Clerk's wig is not a tradition. It should go back into its box until we have a legally qualified Clerk once more.

That is not to say that the Town Clerk is not important – she is. *“The Clerk is a vital team member. She provides advice and administrative support to the Council and she takes action to implement Council decisions. The Clerk may act as project manager, personnel director, public relations officer and finance officer (although our current Town Clerk has been relieved of this responsibility). The Clerk is not just a Secretary and is not at the beck and call of the Chairman or other Councillors; the Clerk is answerable only to the Council as a whole. The Clerk is the proper officer of the Council in law. Councils can delegate decisions to Clerks because they are professional officers whose independence allows them to act on behalf of the Council.”* Source – The Good Councillor's Guide.

How strange, then, to receive a letter from the Deputy Mayor which described our Clerk as a “clerical employee”. Suddenly my heart went out to our Town Clerk. It doesn't do that very often. But the demeaning description of this ancient office from someone who only recently cast her two votes in favour of ‘tradition’ left me cold.

HISTORY SLOT

It is not always Eden's fault. In recent years, Appleby Town Council has tried to pass responsibility for our Tourist Information Centre to Eden District Council but without success. Eden District Council does subsidise the Centre but has told Appleby that this will soon stop. This year the Town Council went so far as to ask E.D.C. for three years' subsidy ‘up front’ to help it out of a financial difficulty. E.D.C. declined.

Prior to 1974, when the District Council was formed, there was no T.I.C. in Appleby. The ‘old’ Borough Council had borrowed over £50,000 to rebuild the Public Hall and was heavily in debt. In January 1974, just three months before being reduced to Parish council status, the Council appointed Miss Hilary Bundy to manage the Public Hall and to be Appleby's tourism manager. Her job was to maximise the potential of the hall and to attract tourists to the town. She resigned three months later. In her letter of resignation, Miss Bundy said that the Town council must clearly define the duties of its staff and then allow them to exercise their initiative. She hoped that her successor would not be treated as a caretaker and that the Council would establish clear reporting lines to avoid leaving employees at the mercy of individual Councillors. The Town Clerk agreed to add Miss Bundy's duties to his own.

In early 1975, the Town Council established a T.I.C. in the Moot Hall. It took advice from Cumbria Tourist Board but there was no financial support from anyone. Appleby's residents were to carry the entire cost. Miss Margaret Dagnall was appointed Town Information Officer. By October 1976, the centre was in financial difficulty. Town Councillors considered ‘borrowing’ £750 from one of the charities it was responsible for in order to plug the gap. One Councillor described the proposal as ‘immoral’ Another said that it was Eden District Council's responsibility but failed to explain what led him to such a conclusion.

In January 1977, Cumbria Tourist Board, Eden District Council and Appleby Town Council agreed to work together and to appoint a joint advisory panel to run the T.I.C. During the financial year 1976/77 Cumbria Tourist Board would contribute £1,200 of the estimated annual cost of £2,500.

The £1,200 would be followed by £600 in the two following financial years. E.D.C. and Appleby Town Council would each contribute £300 in the first year, followed by £950 and £1,200 in the following two years. After that, Appleby would be expected to manage its own T.I.C. In November 1977, Appleby Town council vetoed a suggestion that representatives from Brough and Kirkby Stephen should join the advisory panel so that they could share their expertise. Cllr Wappett objected, saying that they “would take the cream without making any financial contribution”.

In May 1979, the Town Council was advised that the annual loss was £1,000 but this might be reduced that year as it was the 800th anniversary of the grant of the Town’s first charter and this should bring in more income. This proved to be a false hope. Aware that it would be very much on its own after April 1980, the Town council agreed to seek financial contributions from interested groups and individuals. Financial backers would be allowed representation on a joint management team on a pro rata basis. The council suggested that Appleby’s traders might like to contribute £10 per business. The District Council promised £700 if the traders became involved. Appleby’s Chamber of Trade offered £1,000 per annum – which would virtually wipe out the deficit. The Chamber laid down its conditions. The T.I.C. should have an agreed budget and work within it; there must be a monthly audit of expenditure and income; and there should be a stock control system so that a forward purchasing policy could be formulated. The Chamber of Trade also proposed changes to the Centre’s opening hours. Here, at last, was an offer by businessmen to help put the T.I.C. onto a business footing. The Mayor of the day, Cllr Folder, described the Chamber of Trade’s terms “insulting”, adding, “We cannot be dictated to in this way.” The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Forster, said the traders should be content to give the money and leave it to the Council to run the T.I.C. Only one councillor urged caution. Cllr Alice Loughlin said, “I am very sad about the decision. I don’t think the Chamber of Trade want to run the Centre. We have to think about when we have a bypass, when we will need an Information Centre more than ever. We don’t want to become another Brough.”

In December 1986, the hard work of the T.I.C. manageress, Pat Cannon, and her assistant, Margaret Forrester, was officially recognised at a ceremony held at Appleby Castle. Cumbria Tourist Board had complimented the T.I.C. staff for being user friendly.

In November 1987, the Town Council was looking to councillors to come up with ideas for tourism development. Cllr Binney told Councillors to go away and come back with suggestions for the next Council meeting. Something obviously happened as in December that same year, Appleby Town Council, having spent £2,500 on publicity leaflets, asked the District Council for financial assistance. E.D.C. politely declined, pointing out that the T.I.C. was Appleby’s concern, not theirs, and they already provided support to it.

A recent poll conducted by a political party discovered that Appleby’s residents support the need for a Tourist Information Centre.

In 2000/2001 the T.I.C. was losing some £20,000 per annum. Last year the deficit was reduced to £12,000. In 1990, it dealt with fewer than 20,000 visitors. Last year the figure was over 31,000 and rising. Reduced staffing levels at the T.I.C. sometimes mean that there is often only one member of staff on duty, even at peak times. She has to deal with sales and customer enquiries at the counter, by e-mail and by telephone. Customer enquiries cover a wide range of activities such as helping visitors wanting to complain about the state of the Town’s toilets to complete a yellow form. The T.I.C. receives part of its income from commission on hotel and guest house bookings. Missed telephone calls can lead to less income for the T.I.C. and for accommodation providers. Staffing levels at the Public Hall and Moot Hall remain unchanged.

When JURA, the consultants engaged by the now defunct Appleby New Fair Company Ltd, to examined the business potential of New Fair, they reported being surprised to learn that the Town Council had neither a policy nor a strategy for tourism and economic development. Sad to say, it still doesn't. Appleby's T.I.C. is under threat to the severe detriment of our Town.

COMMITTEE MEETING 5 September 2006

Matters Arising from Minutes of Previous meeting:

Outside visits: Committee members were requested to bring any ideas to the next meeting.

Coronation Park: Nothing further to report. The trees blocking the view of the Roman Catholic Church from the town remain but it was decided not to take any further action at this stage.

Shire Hall: Ian had not received any response to his correspondence with Steve Adcock and will write again, copying the letter to Appleby Alliance.

Cemetery Chapel: Ian has reported to the Town Council the Society's opinion. The Deputy Mayor plans to set up a committee to deal with this matter and the Society had been invited to send a representative. Davina will be our representative.

Litter Pick: Consideration to be given to an autumn litter-pick.

Penrith Museum: The Town Council will be contacted to see what, if any, response had been received from Eden District Council by the Town Council to its request for a list of Appleby items currently in the care of the Penrith Museum.

Memorial Trees: A decision on further action was deferred until the next Committee meeting.

Reports:

Treasurer/membership: Olive gave details of the balance as at 26 June and of income and expenditure since. 65 membership renewals had been received.

Oral History: More possible interviewees had come forward.

Planning/Townscape: It was felt that the re-opening of the town and the TV coverage were welcome publicity for the town. Concern was expressed about the fate of the Bullring. Enquiries are to be made regarding costs of re-instating it in the Market Square. Objections had been made to the proposals for removal of the garden walls to the front of the Police Station to enable the installation of a ramp. Possible alternatives had been suggested.

Public Toilets: It was reported that EDC had reduced maintenance of the Shire Hall toilets because there were proposals to sell the Shire Hall. Monitoring of the situation with regard to public toilets is ongoing.

Town Council Liaison meeting: It was felt that this could be a useful forum and disappointment was expressed at the cancellation of the last meeting without any indication of it being re-scheduled.

Appleby New Fair Joint Committee: The Committee was invited to put forward a Society representative and it was agreed that Ian will attend the next meeting.

Society Archive: Discussion took place regarding development of the Society archive and a small sub-committee will meet with Carl Bendelow who has offered assistance.

Exhibitions: It was agreed that an exhibition could be organised for next Easter. It will feature more photographs from the 1970's; this time of villages surrounding Appleby.

Programme 2006/07: Has been arranged. Details to be circulated.

Venue for Public Speaker meetings: Following the stifling conditions in the Supper Room for the A.G.M., a suggestion was made that an alternative venue be considered. Further discussion deferred until the next meeting.

Any Other Business:

Street 'clutter': Discussion took place about the signs appearing on the street, concern being expressed at the number and the problems they cause, as well as the need for the various businesses involved to make their presence known.

Razor wire, Appleby Castle: Further consideration to be given to this matter.

From the Secretary

Civic Trust Awards 2007

We have received notice from Cumbria County Council, Environment Unit, Economy, Culture and Environment Directorate telling us about **THE CIVIC TRUST AWARDS 2007**. Applications are being invited. Eligible schemes should be completed between 1st January 2004 – 30 September 2006. Deadline 13 September 2006. An on-line application process is available. for login details contact Lorraine Scanlon on 0151 231 6904 or email lscanlon@civictrust.org.uk See www.civictrust.org.uk/ctawards for previous rural round winners.

Friends of Cumbria Archives

15th Annual General Meeting to be held at Newton Rigg Campus Conference Centre on Saturday 7 October 2006. Starting at 10.30 a.m. – registration and coffee; 11.00 a.m. - Presentation 'Ballons d'Essai – the new Pevsners' by Matthew Hyde; 12.30 p.m. Lunch; 2.00 p.m. A.G.M.; 2.30 p.m. - Presentation 'Digitisation of Cumbrian Manorial Records' by Dr Eleanor Straughton; 4.00 p.m. tea/coffee and close. Full details of costs, etc. from Vivienne.

Forthcoming publication

Society member, John Sharpe, looks forward to the publication of his biography of **John Metcalfe Carleton, Georgian Rake of the Eden Valley**. Full details from John or Vivienne.

Next Meeting

**Thursday 28 September 2006
7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall**

Speaker: Dr Rob David – “The Yellow Earl’s (the Fifth Earl of Lonsdale) big adventure: the Arctic journey of 1888-89

Dr Rob David was, until recently, a lecturer at St Martin’s College, Lancaster. In this illustrated lecture he tells the story of one of the most unusual nineteenth century journeys undertaken by a Cumbrian – that of The Yellow Earl to the Arctic coast of northern Canada.

Website: www.applebysociety.force9.co.uk

Please Note

If you have enjoyed reading this Newsletter and are not already a member of the *Appleby-in-Westmorland Society*, you could have it delivered free to your home six times a year simply by joining the Society.

A £6 individual/£10 family subscription also entitles you to attend six bi-monthly meetings free. These are usually held in the Supper Room of the Market Hall on the last Thursday of January, March, May, July (our A.G.M. meeting), September and November at 7.30 in the evening.

Application forms are available at the Library or from our Secretary – tel: 017683 51597

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