**Notes of Warcop Annual Parish Meeting 2025**

**Held on Thursday 13th March**

The 2025 Annual Parish Meeting was held on 13th March 2025 in Warcop Parish Hall and was chaired by Councillor Andrew Parkinson (Warcop Parish Council Chair). The following are the notes from the proceedings in accordance with the issued Agenda:

**Opening & Welcome**

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the Parishioners and guest speakers, briefly summarising the Agenda for the evening.

**Warcop Parish Council Chairman’s Annual Report**

The Chairman presented a number of slides summarising the 2025 Parish Council Chairman’s Report and showing the achievements in the Parish through the past year, including in the Villages generally, in the Cemetery and in the Churchyard, as well as forthcoming projects for 2025. The full report is available on the Parish Council website.

**Open Session**

The following points and queries were raised by the audience:

* A resident asked if the history room could be open more regularly and maybe ask residents to volunteer to help with this. The Chairman agreed to speak to the owner regarding this.
* The satellite Post Office in the Parish Hall has not been working for the last 2 weeks and residents are concerned that if this is not used enough then the service will cease. Councillor McDowall agreed to look into this.  
  [Secretaries Note: Shortly after the meeting the Post Office reported that the equipment had been repaired and the Post Office is subsequently working normally once again.]
* A resident asked if the Parish Hall would consider improving the signage for the disabled access bays in the car park. Re-marking of the disabled bays is planned and is awaiting better weather and the availability of the Hall itself and volunteers to carry out the work.
* A resident asked if better speed limit signs could be put up (on the B6259) between Row End and Great Musgrave coming into the village. The Chairman reported the W&F Highways will be installing new speed limit signs scheduled for Spring 2025 following which we will see if speeding into the village from this direction continues to be a concern.
* A resident mentioned the path in Corkey Wood was left in a poor state by the Contractors after the ash tree removal. The Chairman agreed to write to the MOD to ask them to look at this.
* A resident asked if there were any plans for improvement of street lighting. The Chairman reported that W&F are adopting a policy whereby they will take ownership of all street lighting in the Parish including its maintenance. As part of this policy, street lights not working will be repaired and a review of unlit areas will be carried out against the British Standard for lighting streets.
* A resident mentioned the road sweeper does not seem to pass through the village anymore. The Chairman explained that this is a W&F Highways responsibility and encouraged residents to submit these points directly on to W&F website reporting system.

**Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience (CIFR) Project**

The Chairman welcomed project members David Kennedy (Environment Agency) and Caitlin Wood (Natural England) to the meeting to give a presentation on the CIFR Project as it affects the Parish.

The presentation explained the project:

* Focused on improving the flood resilience of small rural communities recognising the impact, now and into the future, of climate change.
* Uses targeted natural flood management techniques (e.g. leaky dams) to slow water ingress into streams and rivers.
* Uses modelling and monitoring to better understand the flow patterns and watercourse responses to rainfall.
* Recognises that natural flood management must be carried out in partnership with landowners.
* Supports communities to prepare better for flood risk, monitoring and evaluation.

The CIFR project team explained that they have already started engaging with the local farming community on natural flood management as well as the A66 NTP Project.

The Chairman stated that this was an interesting and very relevant topic for the Parish after the 2015 experience in storm Desmond and offered to act as the contact for disseminating future information and news to the Parish through the Parish Council website.

**Appleby Horse Fair**

The Chairman welcomed MASCG members Steph Cordon (W&F Director of Thriving Communities and MASCG Chair), Emma Brass (W&F Senior Manager for Public Protection) and Mo Bibby (Neighbourhood Policing Inspector, Cumbria Constabulary) to the meeting for a discussion on Appleby Horse Fair as it affects the Parish.

Steph, Emma & Mo explained that they were visiting a number of affected Parish’s and listening to residents concerns and questions to inform future strategies regarding the Horse Fair. They pointed out that the fair is not an ‘organised event’ as such but is a historic annual gathering of travellers originally as a horse trading event but latterly more of a social gathering over the June weekend. The MASCG’s role is to coordinate the response between all the various parties to minimise the disruption.

There were a number of points and questions raised by residents:

* An impact of the new earth mounds built along the A685 in Kirkby Stephen seemed to be an increase in the number of travellers in and around the roads in the Parish in 2024. Even with a TRO in place, there were a significant number of caravans parked on the verges at Sandford Road End which were not moved on even after being reported.
* The original purpose behind the Warcop Village Green holding area was to provide an opportunity for horse-drawn bow-tows to stop and rest their horses before moving on to Fair Hill. It was noted that many bow-tops now arrive on the back of flat-bed wagons with horses (if indeed present) in horse boxes towed behind.
* The travellers which stop on the village green can be disruptive, blocking the road, and intimidating to residents. Mo Bibby reported that this year, a police liaison officer will be allocated to Warcop who will introduce themselves to the travellers and be on hand to head off any unwanted behaviours.
* The residents raised concerns over the possible impact of the (re-)opening of the Chamley Arms feeling it might exacerbate the problems. It was reported that discussions were ongoing with the Landlord and strategies such as use of plastic glasses being adopted.
* A query was raised about whether the use of Brough Hill Fair Site as a holding area was being considered. This does not appear to be the case.
* A resident pointed out that the modern Fair does not align to the historic dates and arrangements on which the Fair calendar is still based. The dates of the Fair ‘week’ have always been the first Thursday in June to the following Wednesday however in recent years the bulk of travellers have generally arrived on the preceding weekend and move onto Fair Hill on the Thursday when it opens. The ‘Fair’ then spans the Friday and Saturday and most travellers are packed up and gone on the Sunday night and Monday. It was suggested that perhaps ‘Fair Week’ should better reflect this practice and Fair Hill made available to travellers earlier.

**Close**

The Chairman stated that it had been an interesting and useful Parish Meeting and thanked the guest speakers for their time and effort in attending the meeting as well as the members of the Parish in attendance. The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Heidi Strong