Town Meeting of Appleby

The Town Meeting of Appleby was held on Wednesday 29th April 2026

This document includes all the reports received from local groups and organisations, including some that were not able to attend.

If you are interested in joining any of the below organisations, but do not have any contact details, please email admin@applebytown.gov.uk.

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Appleby Town Council Update

The Public Hall has had a very busy year. As well as all of our regular users, we have seen a rise in the number of bookings for new events. A highlight of the year was a talk by the two university professors who discovered an original Magna Carta from the 1300s now owned by Harvard University was in fact Appleby's Magna Carta.

The Council participated in the fabulous celebrations that took place in Appleby for the 80th anniversary of VE Day last May, including organising a Scottish piper and lighting of a beacon on Fair Hill to mark the occasion.

A huge amount of all staff members' time is taken up with enquiries received from residents, businesses and other groups and organisations. Many of the enquiries are not the direct responsibility of Appleby Council, in particular highway issues, but all staff members are very happy to accommodate these requests and help resolve these issues when we can.

Appleby Council is quite unusual for a Parish Council in that it owns quite a lot of property, including the Moot Hall, Public Hall and The Cloisters, as well as 6 retail units. Although the buildings are an asset to both the Council and town, they obviously require looking after and regular maintenance.

Following feedback received from residents and businesses, the Council employed a street cleaning officer last November. Stevie has proved a big success, both for his enthusiasm for his work and his sunny personality and has made a big difference to the appearance of the town.

Sadly, our Public Hall caretaker Pauline retired at the beginning of the year after nearly 28 years of service. We have a new caretaker Jasmine, a young university student, who is very conscientious and doing a great job.

Building Repairs

We have continued to carry out improvements to the Public Hall this year, including decorating the supper room, upstairs foyer and bar area. We have also upgraded the electrical supply to the whole building, including the installation of new circuit boards and cabling. We've also upgraded the fire alarm system to the building and heating boiler for the main hall. We were very fortunate to receive a grant from W&FC's Festival & Events Programme, which funded the historic story boards downstairs in the main hall and the prints in the supper room. The images used are from Appleby & Westmorland Historical Society digital archives. Next year we plan to concentrate on painting the outside of the Moot Hall and decorating the main hall downstairs.

New responsibilities

In October, the Council agreed to take on the responsibility of coordinating the Voluntary Social Care Scheme for Appleby and the surrounding villages on a trial basis, after the long serving coordinator retired. This is proving to be a bit of a challenge and is taking up a considerable amount of staff time, but we have said we are happy to continue to do it, until a suitable volunteer can be found.

In January of this year, Appleby Community Acting Together (ACAT) informed the Council that they could no longer be responsible for the town's Christmas lights. The Council have agreed to take on the responsibility for putting up and taking down the lights going forward.

Council Grants

The Council has two small community grant funds and has given out £4,000 to 5 local organisations in the last 12 months.

We have also established a Shop Front Improvement grant scheme, with the support of Appleby Community Enterprises and we have awarded grants to 7 local high street businesses totalling £6,700.

Finance Report

The Council controls its finances very carefully and our spend for last financial year will come in slightly under budget.

Despite carrying out a number of additional and unexpected activities, which were not budgeted for, we are happy to report that there was no increase in the Parish Council Tax for Appleby residents for this coming year for the second year in a row.

All our finances and accounts are published on the Council website and if any residents have any queries regarding how the Council spend its precept and other income, we are happy to supply this information, if it's not published on the website.

Sue Gilbertson, Town Clerk

Tourism Update

The TIC has had a busy start to the year, with numbers into the centre between Dec and March up a quarter on the same period last year. In addition to this over 400 people came in at the start of Jan for local road permits during the M6 weekend closures. Safe to say alongside being a TIC we are also a busy community information centre covering all local issues - roadworks, lost property, ticket sales, helping new residents and businesses in town etc etc.

It is the 150th anniversary of the Settle to Carlisle line opening this year and we have produced a new Settle to Carlisle railway postcard and magnet, thanks to Michael Summers for use of his images. The Settle to Carlisle development company have lots of plans to celebrate the anniversary including a flash sale with special £1.50 tickets which will be announced in the summer. The Appleby Crafty ladies have got together with the organisers of the Settle plant pot festival and are putting plant pot creations at all the stations along the line. We have renewed our full-page Appleby Advert is this year's line guide as it should be a busy year for day tripping.

At the end of May 30th and 31st, we have the 350th anniversary of Lady Anne Clifford with a festival planned in Kendal and in Appleby over the weekend. There will be a performance and then procession from the Almshouses, a play in St Lawrence's church and a special service in Church on the Sunday.

We have another new long-distance walk, which passes through Appleby, called the Westmorland and Furness Way, 120 miles from Alston to Barrow.

Most of our visitors come from the North of England. 15% of visitors to Cumbria are from overseas - we like international visitors as they spend 55% more than domestic ones and often travel out of season.

Our Facebook and Instagram pages are used to advertise local events and promote the town. 28% of visitors to Cumbria now use social media when planning their visits and our pages also have a large local following. Our website hosts a local events calendar has lots of useful walking, transport, local history information.

Appleby and the Eden Valley recently featured in Countryfile magazine and in the Times "best places to live in the country" supplement.

Looking forward to 2027 - Cumbria will be a host to the Tour de France, so there will be a lot of focus on cycle tourism. The Eden Valley is a great place for cycling, with much quieter roads than the central Lake District.

Nicola Elliott, TIC Manager

Age Concern, Appleby and District

Despite a challenging year regarding the continuing lack of parking spaces and almost incessant roadworks, our charity has continued to grow successfully. Our Low Wiend shops do particularly well and overall, both Low Wiend and the Boroughgate shop in the last financial year have raised more money than in any previous year. The success of our shops is also because we have no paid staff and rely entirely on our very dedicated volunteers who give their time freely, and the generous people in our community who donate the goods we sell.

Our charity is not affiliated to any other charity or group and is run completely independently. Our name remains from our historical links to Age Concern. Our work continues to focus entirely on raising funds to donate to local clubs, organisations, larger charities and events which provide for the older sector of the CA16 district.

In the last round of donations, a total of over £60,500 was given to many local causes and charities which serve our area. Where possible when giving to the larger charities we ensure the money we give is ring-fenced for our area. This year we increased our donations in respect of rising costs. Charities which benefitted include MacMillan Cancer Support, Hospice at Home, Eden Valley Hospice and Jigsaw, Blood Bikes, BEEP Doctors and GNAAS.

Local benefactors include Appleby Evergreen, Appleby Memory Club, Appleby Smarter, Appleby First Responders, Appleby Edibles, Carer Support Eden and Exercise classes. Around our district we have also donated money to Warcop Village Hall, Ormside Village Hall, Long Marton Institute, Colby Village Hall and Knock Mission. Further afield we continue to support Penrith League of Friends. We also fully support the publication of the Heart of Eden Newsletter which we believe is an essential link to the older community.

Unfortunately, our £5000 donation was not enough to save our area's Dementia UK Admiral Nurse due to cuts leading to a discontinuation of other funding. We will however remain sponsors of any future developments for this popular and much needed service.

Finally, we donated our largest sum towards the refurbishment of the Almshouses and fully support the excellent upgrading of this unique housing.

We have donated good quality adult and children's winter clothing and baby equipment which doesn't sell in the shops to Ukraine, and we will continue to support this cause as long as there is a need.

In 2025 we hosted a summer and a Christmas Afternoon Tea for the 80s and over from our district at the Hub in Appleby. These events continue to be very

popular and much appreciated by our guests. We will continue to provide these events as long as they are enjoyed, another is planned for July. Again, we must give our thanks to the lovely people at Appleby Tourist Information who are the centre for our ticket distribution and kindly advertise the events.

Our AGM will be held a little later than usual this year in June and all are welcome to come and enjoy tea and biscuits and hear presentations from the many people we have supported in the last financial year. If anyone is interested in joining us and they feel they have the skills needed to move our charity forward, please contact the Secretary Elaine Barraclough at ageconcernappleby@gmail.com.

June Codd, Chair

Fellside Singers

Fellside Singers have had a very busy year with four concerts, three of which were shared with other groups.

In February last year we were joined in St Lawrence's Church by Lakeland Acapella, and in April we shared a concert with Appleby Band. In June, as is our custom, we went out into the villages, and, in this case, Culgaith, where we shared a concert with the local Pop Choir and as a result of a very successful concert, we were able to donate to Every Life Matters Cumbria. In December we had our annual concert with meal at the Sands Hall.

We like to present a varied programme ranging from Madrigals to the Beatles and folk song to Abba and we are happy to welcome anyone interested in singing: it is not necessary to be able to read music.

Two weeks ago, on April 17th we had a great celebration at the Hub of 30 years of the Fellside Singers – the choir did its first concert in later 1995 under Judy Craig who still sings with the group. We were joined for that occasion by Eden Bells and Acapella a ladies' singing group drawn from members of the main group. On Sunday May 31st we will be performing music from the time of Lady Anne as part of the Lady Anne Clifford 350, Oak Apple Day in St Lawrence's. Our final concert of the season will take place on Tuesday 23rd June at Milburn and proceeds will be shared with a local charity - please do come and listen.

Richard McGregor, Chair

Appleby Air Cadets

It's been a busy year again since the last time I stood here. But from when I think back over the last year the cadet's achievement and their enthusiasm to try new things is outstanding, and none of it would be possible without the team of volunteers I have working with me.

We have been flying twice in the last year, unfortunately it would have been a lot more, but we are slaves to the weather, and if the conditions are not right then they don't fly. But when they do finally get the opportunity, they get 25-30 minutes in the air, where they get the opportunity to take control of the plane, the pilots love doing the acrobatics with them. Some cope with this better than others and can be a little wobbly when they return to the airfield or a little green.

For the 2nd year running we have worked with Cumbria Police to host 2 cybercrime evenings and are looking at doing more in the future. At least this year they managed to complete the escape rooms, even if with all their skills with modern technology, the hardest thing for them was once they had worked out the combination of the brief cases, how to open it.

We have spent a lot of time working on life skills this year such as first aid, not just doing the training but offering scenarios for the cadets to put their skills to good use. There first aid skills are improving, but their acting skills are outstanding, in fact if you walked past the squadron during one of the scenarios you would think we were murdering them at times. I can't fault their enthusiasm.

We had a busy summer in 2025, one cadet spent 6 nights on a tall ship sailing around the UK, 4 cadets spent a week at Halton camp in Lancashire learning leadership, drill, first aid, radio skills and more. I took 4 cadets to RAF Cranwell for a week's summer camp where they got to experience RAF life and 1 cadet attended a paddle sports camp in the Lake District.

We also like to have a bit of fun along the way, hosting a great summer barbeque for cadets and their families. The squadron annual water fight was fun as always, although I seem to get the wettest every year. We had a great night at the trampoline park at Carlisle and came 2nd in the annual sector 10 pin bowling competition to Whitehaven.

Our cadets are proud each year to turn out and help with the poppy appeal, and take part in the Remembrance Day Parade in Appleby and Kirby Stephen, with 95% of the sqn attending. Some only have just over a month's experience within the squadron, which is always a challenge, but one that they rise to every year.

We work closely with our feeder schools in Appleby and Kirkby Stephen, through assemblies and had another successful open evening and intake of cadets this past year with 15 joining the squadron. With a few deciding cadets wasn't for them we now have a squadron strength of 27 cadets and a strong mixture of 6 uniform and non-uniform staff.

This year is shaping up to be just as busy, we are taking 16 of our cadets to RAF Cosford in May for a 2 night stay where we will be visiting the RAF Cosford, The National Memorial Arboretum and Cosford Air Museum. We are doing this jointly with Whitehaven Cadets at a cost of £20, which means that most families can access this, and we have a fund on squadron to help families if needed. We are also taking a mini bus jointly with Kendal Squadron to the RAF Cosford Air Show. My biggest problem is picking 7 cadets from the 15 who want to go.

As an organisation many squadrons have been going through a difficult time for the last 2 months, as due to some maintenance issues have not had access to their squadron building, which is looking like it will last another month at least. The Town Council have been amazing and supported us allowing us to hire the supper room on a Monday and Thursday allowing us to carry on parading. Having this support has made a massive difference to us as some squadrons have had to reduce parade nights to one night or close.

That is only a flavour of what we have done this year, but we do have a public Facebook page that you can follow if you want to see what the squadron is up to, or we are looking for help on our civilian committee, which if anyone is interested in, they meet every 2 to 3 months and are responsible for the fundraising side of cadets. I am happy to talk to anyone if you would be interested.

Thank you!

FS Dawn Brown, FS Commanding

Appleby and District Branch, Royal British Legion

We were formed on the 27th of June 1921, following the Formation of the British Legion in May of the same year, and have supported the ex-forces community ever since.

The Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club was set up by committee member Ben McDonald to reach out to the veteran community, in conjunction with the Hub. It has enjoyed its first year of success and is growing. Also, thanks to Ben we have an active Facebook page with good interaction, and it is helping to spread the word about the work we do and events.

80th Anniversaries of VE and VJ Day – Events across the Town were well supported by the Branch, some venues of note were Duncan Curley afternoon teas as well as the Methodists Chapel, the committee enjoyed sampling them both! Local business made a superb effort in decorating their windows. Our temporary poppy display outside the club was excellent and my thanks to Colin Smith for his hard work. Lakeland Lazer have manufactured a silhouette for us thank again to Colin's efforts, we hope this will be erected outside the War Memorial Swimming pool in due course.

We Launched the Appeal with the help of the town band running our first Remembrance concert, the event was well attended, and we have had nothing but positive feedback, we hope to do this again on the 24th October. The Poppy Appeal raised £2800 in Appleby and £6399 from Tebay. Once again, we supported the council with the Parade and Church service, another well supported parade (my 21st as standard bearer!), my thanks to the Council, Town band, the church, the youth organisations and everyone who came in support.

We ran an event for ex forces and blue light workers with One Vison Uniformed Services and Andy Steele, to look at support for those groups and their families, an excellent and thought provoking evening.

Lastly, I would like to place on record my thanks and appreciation of the Branch Committee, we are a small committee and not able to do all the events we would like. We are actively trying to support The RBL Club and Women's section (as these are separate entities to the RBL Branch). However, with less than 70 members we are struggling to be a viable branch, and without people to take on roles on the committee we face the real risk of laying up the Branch standard and closing the Branch after 105 years of continuous service.

You do not need to be ex forces to be a member or to join the committee.

Simon Walton, Standard Bearer

Appleby Archaeology

2025 was a very successful and varied year for Appleby Archaeology Group. We had a great variety of talks ranging from Lindisfarne to Ambleside Roman fort, from Cumbrian rock art to aerial archaeology in Britain, Europe and the Middle East, summer visits to Gueswick near Barnard Castle, Lowther and Mayburgh Henge. Our average attendance, with a membership of 50+ often exceeds 40 with visitors regularly coming because of our extensive advertising in the paper, on social media and posters.

We held two very successful Open Days one in the hub and one in the Cloisters – despite the weather on both days – and these were visited by around 80 people. We have established strong contacts with Oxford Cotswold Archaeology who use Appleby and Warcop as a base for workshops based on archaeological skills and there is a promised training dig for later this summer.

The highlight of the year was a ten day dig, under the supervision of Martin Railton, at Castrigg just to the north of the town which we proved, despite Storm Amy, was not primarily a Roman signal station but a Romano-British settlement. For this we were most grateful for funding, which was received from Appleby Rotary, Age Concern, Appleby Town Council, British Gypsum, and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. Thanks to the interest of the landowner, we are fund raising to return to the field to investigate a circular feature which only shows on a 1949 aerial photograph. All the reports of our investigations are available on our website apparch.org. The Castrigg report is just waiting for the results of soil analysis to be included, and it will then be available on the website. I should just thank our volunteer diggers – places were filled in just two days with a waiting list.

We have a new planning group which is looking at the creation of a larger three-year project which will be based round an examination of various local settlement sites which have not been explored previously. We have received the permission from three landowners already and have 8 detailed letters of support, because of which we have been able to make a strong Heritage Lottery application, submitted last month and we are hopeful that we be successful in achieving funding.

The summer visits this year are being planned, and next year's speaker programme is set and can be found by going to our website and clicking on Newsletters. These newsletters summarise all the talks which we have had and are a great resource.

If anyone is interested in helping us with any of these activities, please contact me at richardmcgregor@me.com.

Richard McGregor, Member

Appleby Bowling Club

The new 2026 bowling season has commenced with some trepidation because of the perilous situation of the club membership. With now only 35 playing members and these being mainly 75+ in age, it leaves the club with little wiggle room to engage its teams in county games.

However, a comprehensive campaign throughout Appleby and the villages, with extensive leafletting and publicity events, such as hosting a young farmers introduction event, has already reaped 23 new members, and growing.

With the re-introduction of a regular social evening open to all comers, there would seem to be a wind of change afoot and a new excitement as new players take to bowling and find it as rewarding as we all have in the past.

All in all, things are looking up, and although we still need more members, we are hopefully that this will continue to increase as the word is spread of renewed vigour in the club.

We would like to thank the Council for its interest in the Bowling Club. We are aiming to try and make our wonderful facilities at the club open to disabled access, to allow access to everyone with a new access ramp.

Rick Gannon, President

Appleby Crafty Women

We started the year deciding to cheer up the children's section of the library (We had already made them floor cushions and bean bag seats the previous year). we made jolly ceiling mobiles.

Colin Smith from Royal British Legion asked for our help in making poppies for the 80th anniversary of VE Day. We decided to make 80 large poppies using bottles, metal, felt and corks. These turned out to be very labour intensive – the bottles had to be cut and sprayed red, the metal stakes suitable for storks, sourced and purchased. 80 poppies were completed and handed over to Colin ready for the celebration. He placed one each day leading up to the legion ready for all 80 to be in place for the 8th May.

We tried out new hand at a new skill, 'Decoupage'. We decorated plant pots and glass jars ready for our Christmas sale on Sparkle Day.

We made a poppy panel and VE decorations for Howgill Butchers windows. Creating a street party in one window and handmade war memorabilia for the other. We also decorated the Little Shop on the Bridge's window and placed Easter decorations around the town.

May to September were an extremely busy couple of months making new animals and pot people for our river trail 2025. We were extremely proud of our animal safari, having created a lion, gorilla, 2 giraffes, hippo, elephant, zebra, snakes in the trees, monkeys, giant spiders and spiderman himself! Teletubbies, minions, Cruella de Vil, the Wizard of Oz, Snow White, bug hotel, post box topper and bunting between the trees along the river. We also made plant pot people for each bench around the river and at the railway station, with Thomas the Tank Engine figures at the station too.

We had a theme of Mr Men and Little Miss for the children to find with the characters handmade out of wood then painting and hidden along the river.

These were all placed out by the 2nd week of June then maintained, and monitored daily throughout the summer, right until after Heritage Open Weekend in December.

At the end of the year, we brought in the figures, cleaned, mended them and tidied them away. We focussed on making Christmas decorations around town and items to sell on the Sparkle Day stall.

The Crafty Women Group

Appleby Town Band

Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Band is still active in and around Appleby throughout the year. In the 12 months since 30th April 2025, there have been 20 engagements, six of which were in Appleby (including the Royal British Legion concert, the Remembrance Sunday procession, the annual Hospice at Home Concert, as well as Christmas engagements like Sparkle Day); eight were at events in villages around Appleby, like fetes and Farmers' Markets, and five were fund-raising events for Band funds outside supermarkets in Penrith and at Westmorland Services. There was also a Massed Band event, involving bands from all over Cumbria, at Lowther Castle in May; and Band members also played for the Easter Sunrise Service ten days ago at 6.30am on Orton Scar. Already the Band has 10 further engagements in the diary for the rest of 2026, including some for the first time – at Acorn Bank for the new waterwheel opening, Appleby Carnival, Appleby Football Tournament, and Christmas carols at Sleagill donkey sanctuary.

There are now 20 members of the band and the ages of members range from 22 to 89. The longest-serving members have played with the Band for over 40 years, while others have joined in the last few months.

Our previous conductor who had joined us in early 2024, Gavin Brown, a very experienced brass player from the North-East, sadly left us after the Royal British Legion Concert in October. We acquired a new conductor, Ron Kelley, in February this year – a musician with varied instrumental and vocal musical experience but not previously with brass bands; but we have really enjoyed and appreciated his early weeks with us.

The Band still rehearses each Wednesday evening in this Supper Room for which we have to pay a fee. As a result of this and other expenses, we have not only had to undertake the five fund-raising sessions mentioned, but all band members now pay a monthly membership fee. Other expenses include insurance, repairs to instruments, purchase of music, and band uniforms.

We are always keen to recruit new members and have recently started a beginners' group for three adult members, and in addition two of our experienced players give lessons to youngsters in school, who we hope may join the band in due course.

Band members are all happy to continue making what we believe is a valuable and appreciated contribution to the life of our town and district community.

Christopher Jenkinson, Secretary

Appleby Town Carnival

Appleby Town Carnival, formally known as The Royal British Legion Carnival, was handed to the town in 1977, where each year its committee, along with the support of local businesses, have put on a weekend of fun, music and entertainment for people of all ages, up until 2019.

The great Paul Naisbitt chaired every committee in the time, he put his heart and soul into not just Appleby Carnival, but Appleby in general. Sadly, we lost Paul in 2023 and he is greatly missed. Paul's passing was part of the reason that I made the decision to relaunch Appleby Carnival, to honour his memory and give the town back this wonderful weekend that has been missed.

We held an open meeting in January 2025, which was well attended and following that, we formed a committee.

We have done lots of fundraising since then and along with grants from Appleby Town Council and Westmorland and Furness Council, we are in a position to put on a spectacular weekend which will be accessible to all.

We have lots planned, including:

- Family bingo
- Funfair
- Live music
- Food and drink
- Football tournament
- Entertainment for all ages
- Inflatables and the grand parade

The cost of putting on the Carnival now exceeds £13,000, so our fundraising and grant applications have been vital. Thank you to everyone who has helped and supported us, particularly Sue the Town Clerk, and Appleby Town Council.

Going forward, we need more support and volunteers to make the Carnival 2027 happen. We haven't got the number of volunteers we had hoped for this year, so its essential people come forward if they want events like this to happen.

A committee for 2027 will be formed at an AGM later this year. We hope to have a large and successful Carnival that will include something for all ages, and we hope everyone can come along to enjoy it.

Donna Gates, Chair

Appleby Edibles

Who we are

We are a small, constituted community group based at the Appleby Heritage Centre site in Appleby-in-Westmorland. We currently have 22 members renting a garden space (bed) at a cost of £15.00 per plot, per annum. Individual beds are available both inside and outside our large polytunnel. We currently have 7 outside beds and 2 inside beds available for new members. Although we welcome members of all ages, the vast majority of our current members are either retired or approaching retirement.

What we do

On Tuesday and Saturday mornings between 10am and 12 noon, we welcome visitors to the site. Any members who are willing and able to attend these sessions work together on maintaining and improving the grounds.

We have an AGM in April each year when we vote in Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, and three other committee members. We also hold regular members' meetings, which all members are encouraged to attend.

Polytunnel project

We have a large polytunnel (75 feet long), which was originally used to house the refurbishment of a steam engine. This has been subject to an ongoing repair and renovation project which has now been completed. We still plan to install a solar powered automatic irrigation system in the polytunnel.

We have received funding from a number of sources including Appleby Town Council who gave us a grant of £500 in 2025. This has enabled us to build 10 more raised beds, 8 inside the polytunnel and 2 outside. 5 of the polytunnel beds have replaced old rotten beds, so we have 3 additional beds inside the polytunnel. As a result of this work, we have been able to attract 10 new members within the last 12 months. We have recently purchased additional scaffolding boards to make a further 5 more outside beds to replace rotten beds outside the polytunnel.

We have also completed extensive maintenance on the grounds outside of the polytunnel and created additional capacity to collect and store rainwater.

As a result of all this work, the site has become a pleasant place which encourages wellbeing & healthy lifestyles and the sharing of horticultural knowledge and experience.

Julie Johnstone, Treasurer

Appleby Emergency Response Group

As of 31st December 2025, we had a total of 64 registered volunteers (including committee members).

Flooding:

No significant flooding was experienced in 2025. Between 1st January 2025 and 31st December 2025, the Environment Agency issued 10 Flood Alerts (the same number as in 2024) and 2 Flood Warnings (I less than in 2024).

Some of those flood alerts were issued on consecutive days – 1,2 November, 12,13,14 November or close together – 8,9,13,17 December. The Environment Agency's process is to issue a flood alert when the river is predicted to reach 1.8m. This is to ensure that we can give local residents as much notice as possible, particularly in circumstances where a lot of rainfall is expected to continue falling overnight, for example. It allows people to prepare adequately by putting in their flood defences or to consider moving their vehicles to higher ground.

Cumbria has the highest number of rapid response catchments in the UK. This is a challenge because water levels in these catchment areas rise very quickly which makes it difficult to gauge water levels at times.

We have a good working relationship with the Environment Agency and always have a discussion with them prior to issuing any communications regarding flood alerts and warnings so that we can give you as much information as possible and provide regular updates. What we don't want is for local residents to become complacent when these alerts are issued as the weather is becoming increasingly unpredictable so please do heed any flood alerts or warnings that we issue on Facebook or through our Appleby Emergency Support Network and take appropriate action to protect yourselves and your properties.

Appleby Emergency Support Network: There are 88 registered participants signed up for this service which ensures that participants receive SMS messages in the event of a potential emergency. This includes not just flood alerts and warnings but also includes options to be kept informed of other events such as:

- Emergency Town Bridge Closure
- Pandemic event
- Utilities failure (water/gas/electricity)
- Severe Storms & gales
- Severe Cold & snow
- Telecommunications outage (mobile/broadband/landline network)

- Severe Drought/heatwave
- Any other major incident causing significant disruption.

Local residents can sign up to this service via our website.

We now have 3,144 Facebook followers, an increase of 344 from last year.

We are currently funded through a grant of £12,500 received from CCF in 2024, primarily to fund a part time project coordinator, and also to assist with ongoing annual operational costs.

During the last 12 months we have:

- Invested in First Aid training for our committee members
- Reviewed our policies, procedures and other governance documents
- Reviewed and updated our community emergency plan
- Reviewed and updated our website
- Completed an audit of our equipment and resources

This work ensures that we are resilient and prepared should an emergency incident occur in the town and that we are able to provide a response which meets community needs.

We currently have 9 committee members, many of whom have been with us since the group was first constituted in 2017 following Storm Desmond. We would welcome new committee members as several of our existing members are already retired or are approaching retirement. If anyone is interested, please let me know.

Julie Johnstone, Project Coordinator and Secretary

Participation at the Club is thriving. As we reported previously, membership has been growing over the past few years, largely thanks to the success of the Junior football section. We currently have roughly 200 members: 120 junior footballers, 40 senior footballers and 40 squash players.

During the year, the Club has completed a significant refurbishment of its 40 year old Clubhouse. This refurbishment has focused on the social areas of the Clubhouse; installing a new kitchen and additional toilets, internal work on the Addison room, and replacing the roof and external windows and doors. The refurbishment provides us with a facility that we can use to generate additional revenue from both sporting and non-sporting activities to contribute to the ever increasing costs of running the Club.

The improved facilities now enable us to provide food and drink to supporters and teams before, during and after matches, and host club fundraising events. We are also hoping that the significantly enhanced facilities will enable us to become an asset to the local Community; the facilities are available either to local groups on a recurring basis or for one-off events.

As part of the Town Carnival weekend in July, our Junior Football section has organised a Junior football tournament which has attracted significant interest from the wider community (over age groups from U8 to U14, we have 52 teams competing from across the County).

Senior Football

We have a First team and a Reserves team who both play in the Westmorland Football League.

Our First team is currently fourth in the First Division of the League with six games left to play. They won the season opening Westmorland FA Invitation Trophy, were the beaten finalists in the Westmorland FA Senior Cup, and are competing in the Final of the Westmorland FA Benevolent Trophy on 1 May at Kendal.

Our Reserve team is currently in the top half of Division 3 of the League, with four games left to play. The Reserves play a significant role in both supporting the First Team and providing a bridge into Senior Football for the Junior sides at 16 years old; we had a game this season where four 16 year olds played for us in the same match which is great to see.

Junior Football

For the 2025/2026 season we have had the following teams participate in the Penrith and District Junior League: two U9 teams, U10, two U11 teams, U12,

U13/14 and U16. We also have a growing U7/U8 team who are getting themselves ready to play in the league next season.

All Junior teams have performed very well in their respective league and cup matches. Our U11 Sharks won the mixed U12 Joe Fisher Cup for the first time in 30 years. Our U9 Wolves came third in the Ali Stewart Cup. Our U13/14 Appleby Eagles have reached the finals of the Robert Irving Cup, and our U16 Appleby Reds have reached the finals of the Ted Nanson Cup. Both finals are to be played in early May.

The Junior section of the club continues to grow in numbers attracting more players and it's great to see more volunteers getting involved to help coach the teams and support the club.

We are all thoroughly looking forward to next Season where we will be looking to continue our great Cup runs and push hard to move up the respective league tables whilst of course having plenty of fun along the way.

Squash

Appleby only fielded one team in the county league this year instead of two due to the lack of a consistent number of players to enable us to do this week in week out.

The team played in a very strong premier league once again, with the standard being set high with quality players right the way through all teams. Appleby finished 3rd bottom in the league.

Appleby were entered into the Division 1 county cup which is basically the lower division cup. We won that last Saturday, beating Kendal in the final 4-0 in a match that was played in a final’s day for all competitions at Carlisle squash club. It was great day out and well done to the team members who participated. The trophy is currently on display in Dowdings Butchers in town.

As a club we have similar members to last year and would be welcoming of anyone interested in joining our club. Any interest then please get in touch with Mitch Dowding either at the butchers or on 07813437197.

Martin Smith, Chair

Appleby Hub

We have been awarded a grant from the National Lottery, Community Fund which we are using this to facilitate our ‘Thoughtful Tuesday’ groups. These are run every Tuesday throughout the month. All these groups are completely free. People can pop in for a coffee and chat or stay for the whole thing 10am -2pm, refreshments and lunch are provided. As always, the Hub is judgment free zone where everyone is welcomed.

- **First Tuesday** – A guided walk and talk group for mental wellbeing. All are welcome but especially anyone who is feeling lonely or isolated, or struggling with anxiety and depression. If you don’t like walking you can just stay at the Hub, there are books, games and crafts. Carlisle and Eden MIND attend too they offer their expertise, signposting and a listening ear. We offer friendship and hospitality.
- **Second Tuesday** – support for parents of children with special educational needs
- **Third Tuesday** – Dementia carers support
- **Fourth Tuesday** – Men’s café - We continue to run our HAF programme in the school holidays for children who receive free school meals during term time. Almost all of the children we support also have additional needs. We feed them and their families we provide activities and presents for them throughout the holidays.

This year the Appleby Hub is 10 years old, and our special garden will have the theme of celebration and lots of repurposed tin (which represents 10 years) we will be using our own compost and home grown seedlings (all donations welcome as always). For the past few years, we have received a gold award from the Cumbria in Bloom judges as well as a national certificate of excellence from the RHS, so we hope to repeat that again on our anniversary year!

Sarah Jones, Manager

Appleby Remote Cinema

This is our 14th year showing films in Appleby. We couldn't do this without our volunteers who work hard to help increase access to arts, culture and quality films, locally. We choose our films twice a year, usually from a menu curate d by Cine North, but not exclusively. The films include arthouse, British, foreign language and one or two blockbusters or locally made films. We theme our food offer, so for example, a film and food ticket of just £12, for our Spring Season, up to £13 for our Autumn season. Film only tickets are still just £4. We offer an affordable, safe and social night out for singles, friends, families and visitors that takes you around the world and sometimes out of your comfort zone for a couple of hours.

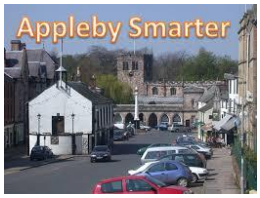
In 2025 we showed 10 films including: Outstanding British films such as Sightseers filmed locally; Conclave, winner of numerous BAFTA's and awards; and The Outrun set in the Outer Hebrides. A Taste of Things gave us a French film and La Chimera set in Sicily, about the black market in antiquities. Our more mainstream, A Complete Unknown, was a Bob Dylan biopic and two American films A Real Pain and The Brutalist addressed uncomfortable issues such as the impact of the Jewish holocaust on survivors and their families. For Appleby's families, we partnered up with ACAT for Sparkle Day to present Arthur Christmas which was a great success.

Over 14 years, we have built up a core, faithful audience that seem to come to whatever we put on. In 2025, 726 people enjoyed our film shows, up from 2024 by 76. Of these our smallest audience was 55 for La Chimera (up by 10 from our lowest in 2024) and our largest 101 for Conclave. (Who knew that a film about the process involved in the selection of the pope, would have been so popular!)

15 volunteers put in a conservative 700 volunteer hours. At the going rate of £14.43 an hour, that's £10,101 in real money. We regularly work with local businesses to cater food for our films. We supported 11 local businesses and put nearly £5000 into the local economy. We paid £830 to Appleby Town Council for hall rental which contributes to the running of the hall on a regular basis; we paid £1391 to Cine North for cinema licenses which go towards paying filmmakers for their work.

Finally, we are not for profit, and any excess funds go to support local charities and creative initiatives. In 2025 we gave a total of £2800 to: Cumbria Aid Ukraine, Cumbria Opera Group, Highlights Rural Touring's Big Give's Art for Impact, Medical Aid for Palestinians and Support for Palestinian Students to Study Abroad.

Karen Babayan, Chair



Appleby Smarter

Appleby Smarter is a group made up of volunteers who take pride in the appearance of our lovely town. We are a sociable group of mainly retired folk, and we enjoy the company and companionship of the group so much that we have built up strong friendships throughout the time that we have been volunteering. We are still very proud that we were nominated for a King's Award for volunteer groups.

Here are just a few of the jobs that we have carried out and will carry out in the near future to make a difference to the town. We recently started in Boroughgate, varnishing and painting al the wooden benches and will continue to do so to such benches throughout the rest of town.

In the past weeks we have also been clearing Back Lane as it needed a lot of tidying up following the previous strong winds. We have also cleaned and painted the steps to the Moot Hall in the centre of town. Then there was the clearing and cutting back of the foliage on the raised bed and adjoining area by the bridge at the start of the Butts. We also cleaned the new bollards on the Butts leading up to the first shelter. We have recently cleaned the steps up to Appleby Grammar School and Holme Wood and cut back the foliage on the wall and cleared the pavement along Battlebarrow, leading up to Appleby Grammar School. We cleaned up the whole area around Jubilee Bridge and also scraped the moss off the sides of the bridge.

In the summer we will be going back to Appleby Sation to mow the grass around and paint the stone spelling out the name of the town. We will also be cutting back and weeding the pathway behind the Methodist Chapel on the Sands and will Also be keeping the paths clear and cutting back foliage in the Memorial Gardens at the top of the path. We take lot of pride in our work carried out as regards those gardens. We feel that this should be done as visitors to the town who use the station and walk into town get a first impression of Appleby and get a very good view of the town from the gardens.

There are lot of jobs that we do around town as you can see. We also work very closely with the Town Clerk and we find the Council very supportive of our group. Appleby Smarter is open to everyone and we very much welcome new volunteers. Our numbers have grown this. If you see us in town wearing our high visibility vests, then please do say hello.

Mike Eden, Chair

Appleby Wombles

It's been another busy year for Appleby Wombles and the Wombling Free Eden Facebook group in general and we are sorry that no-one is able to attend the meeting this year.

Once again, we have tried very hard to bring the awful scourge of litter to the forefront of people's minds with a meeting with Tim Farron and emails back and forth from Tim and ourselves to Westmorland and Furness Council to try and find ways to encourage road users not to dump their waste, but unfortunately this has been to no avail.

We have been told categorically not to litter pick on the lay-bys on the A66 as too dangerous and also that the council litter pick every two weeks along the road which we feel strongly is not the case!

As far as Appleby is concerned, we will keep doing our bit whenever we can. 6 of our group took part in the Great British Spring Clean weekend and collected 15 blue bags of rubbish and/or recycling around the outskirts of the town. Unfortunately, we are still finding lots of human waste and dog waste bags in our picks. The human waste becomes more obvious as the undergrowth dies back.

We do not keep a running total of what we pick up around Appleby, but we can tell you that from our Facebook group which covers mainly Appleby and Penrith areas, volunteers collected a total of 872 blue bags of litter in the past year. One of the members of our group was interviewed for Cumbria television when they saw this total on our page which we were very pleased about.

We would also like to thank the Town Council for hiring Stevie to keep the town tidy – every little bit helps.

Nikki Brabant – Chair

Voluntary Social Car Scheme

Appleby Town Council took over Appleby's Voluntary Car Scheme in November 2025 after the previous co-ordinator, Val Kendall, stood down after running it voluntarily for 5 years. When she stood down, we had many concerned residents asking us what would happen to the scheme, as it is very well used and many people's only form of transport. It was agreed that Appleby Council would take over running the scheme until another volunteer coordinator could be found.

The Voluntary Social Car Scheme is intended for people who have no other means of transport and provides a door-to-door service to collect people from their home and take them to their destination at a reasonable cost. The service can be used for a wide variety of purposes including attending hospital, doctor and dentist appointments, making connections with public transport, doing the weekly shop and visiting friends. Customers have to pay a small charge, which goes towards the drivers' expenses, but it is not an expensive scheme as it is supported by Westmorland and Furness Council. The cost for a return journey from Appleby to Penrith is only £10.

Since November we have organised almost 700 drives, around 300 of which are regular weekly drives. Over half of the transport required is to and from hospital and doctors' appointments, and people often only receive their letters a couple of days before their appointment. We do ask that customers give us as much notice as they can, but unfortunately this is not always possible.

We currently have nine voluntary drivers, who do a wonderful job and are able to cover the vast majority of our enquiries, but we would benefit from having more. Four new drivers have joined us since November, which we were very grateful for as for a short while we only had 4 available! There's no minimum time commitment, and drivers can do as much or as little as they wish. Drivers provide transport for people using their own car, and are reimbursed fuel expenses based on a set amount per mile. They were also treated to coffee and cake earlier in the year so they could meet other drivers, and also so we could meet them. Our longest running driver has been with the scheme for almost 10 years.

We circulate all requests we receive, and drivers can choose which ones they can help with. We get a lot of good feedback, and customers are always very grateful when we can arrange them transport. We currently have around 60 regular users of the scheme. If you could benefit from it, or know someone who could, you can get in touch with us by popping into the TIC or giving us a call.

Emma Simpson, Clerk's Assistant

Welcome Inn Sanctuary

‘All are welcome’ is the perfect phrase to capture our weekly Welcome Inn sessions… We have our familiar ‘regulars’, some of whom arrive well before our opening time & begin the setting up process…. Turning on the Urn, putting out the chairs etc. It has been wonderful to celebrate those who have gone on to become Volunteers, completing their safe recruitment. In October, we were delighted to welcome Bradley Coates, our Intern, to join the Team, as part of his placement. He has contributed to leading the weekly prayer & been a wonderful presence.

Our Team ‘Away a Day’s’ have been opportunities to reflect on our identity, to explore how we’re each contributing to our shared mission as a Healthy Healing Hub & to strengthen our bonds. Our communal worship is now an established part of our sessions.

Welcome Inn has become a place where folks can share their joys & sorrow, their hopes & fears & their anxieties about their lives, their families & friends & our world. Little did we know, as we celebrated our third birthday, the changes & challenges that lay ahead.

Our gentle friend, Keith, died unexpectedly & is dearly missed by us all. His smiling face, wit & endless stories & songs, accompanied by his melodic harmonica playing enchanted us all. It was a privilege, for many of us, to attend his Funeral, in his home Church at Kirby Thore.

Sadly, as Advent drew to an end, Rev Fran Parkinson, a founder member of the Welcome Inn, Healthy Healing Hub, had discerned that the Lord was summoning her to new pastures, nearer to her home, in our neighbouring Benefice. She has been a true blessing throughout these past 3 years, co-leading Welcome Inn, sharing her gifts of Shepherd/Teacher with generosity & love. Fortunately, our Rector, Rev. Andrew Burrell, has stepped into the breach!

We’re now known as The Welcome Inn Sanctuary, emphasising a theme of Sanctuary, which Rev Andrew will develop during the coming months. We are no longer affiliated as a Healthy Healing Hub, although the healing ministry remains an integral part of many of our Team’s ministry.

Let’s leave the final word to our ‘regulars’. We invited everyone to write down anonymous comments: ’A chance to meet & take part in a Christian Community, ’A non-judgmental space to seek help in moments of doubt’, ’A place to feel safe & valued’, ’A happy, safe place to be’.

Sue McGuiness, Volunteer