

The Conservative Times

Getting used to life in the 'new normal'

Local Committee meeting dates

- **Allerdale:** Wednesday July 1
- **Barrow:** Tuesday July 7
- **Eden:** Tuesday July 14
- **Carlisle:** Thursday July 16
- **South Lakes:** Tuesday July 21
- **Copeland:** Monday July 27

WELCOME to the Conservative Group's June newsletter.

Sadly, this month we lost a much valued colleague in Lawrence Fisher; please see the tributes to Lawrence further in the newsletter.

As the country continues to make good progress in its fight with Covid-19, we here in Cumbria begin to try and get back to some sort of normality, albeit with some restrictions still in place.

This is where the work really starts; and getting our children back to school is a top priority.

As I write this, all our schools are open but attendance in the year groups attending is very mixed.

We all must do our bit to get a positive message out there and encourage parents to do the right thing.

Education is a key factor in our economic recovery, which is critical right across the county, with such sectors as tourism and hospitality under particular threat.

We are all getting used to handling meetings virtually and I am pleased that the Shadow Cabinet have been working hard to hold senior officers to account.

They also continue to work on realistic and sustainable proposals for our manifesto on which we will fight next year's elections.

If you have any suggestions for the manifesto or just want a chat please do contact me.

Enjoy the newsletter.

JAMES



JAMES AIREY: Conservative Group Leader

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Group Office: stationery orders are... stationary

ALL the Group Offices remain closed to staff and members as the council's Covid-19 response continues.

This means Lana is not able to go into the office to dispatch items of stationery to members.

We are awaiting information

from Legal & Democratic Services on what the new arrangements will be for getting stationery to members.

Lana is collating orders from members in the meantime and we hope the new arrangements for dispatch will be in place as soon

as possible. We hope you will bear with us until we know more from Legal & Dem Services.

Please also note Lana's new working pattern, which began this month: Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm, with Friday a non-working day.

Financial round-up with Hilary Carrick



HILARY CARRICK:
Deputy Group Leader

“Never, in 11 years of having been an elected member, have I felt so out of touch with what is going on”

AS we approach the time of year when we review the Council’s financial performance for last year I can honestly echo Stewart Young and Peter Thornton’s age old reference to times of uncertainty, **but for real.**

Never, in 11 years of having been an elected member, have I felt so out of touch with what is going on.

This is way beyond the normal custom and practice of the opposition being the last ones to find out what is going on; indeed, this level of ignorance is (a little like the pandemic) absolutely ‘unprecedented’.

Not only are we all understandably slightly in the dark about what the government’s future funding for local authorities may look like, but we are absolutely in the dark about what this council has received to date and how it has been spent.

So, what **do** we know?

Cumbria County Council has received four sets of Covid-specific funding from the government to date:

£16.086m towards the addi-

tional cost of addressing Covid;

£9.118m as a second tranche of funding towards general Covid expenditure;

£5.679m ring-fenced for infection control with 75 per cent to be passported to CQC registered beds and 25 per cent as discretionary expenditure;

£1.718m ring-fenced towards the additional cost of providing a local track and trace service.

A total of approximately **£32.5m**, albeit not all coming to the County Council, but certainly the vast majority is - or will be.

Apart from Covid, I am also aware that the council has received £10.866m from the government for pothole funding and I am led to believe that there are all sorts of additional mini pots that have headed our way but, even as your ‘finance person’, I find myself in a position of not knowing what I do not know.

Any time now, I am expecting to receive a copy of the most recent return that was

sent to MHCLG last Friday, which details how the council has spent the additional funding it received from government specifically on Covid-related activities.

However, in the meantime I am aware that the shortfall is of the order of £20m and our reserves were, the last time I looked, approximately £15m.

Philosophically this puts me in mind of a quote from *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens, which outlines Mr Micawber’s recipe for happiness: “Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen [pounds] nineteen [shillings] and six [pence], result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.”

HILARY

Virtual council meetings

THE move towards a diary of virtual council meetings is continuing, with all Local Committees holding live meetings throughout July - dates for which are on the front page of the newsletter.

Bill Wearing is pushing for scrutiny meetings to be held as a priority; but at the time of writing, only informal

scrutiny meetings are being scheduled.

Over the next two months, the following live meetings will take place in addition to the Local Committee meetings, all of which will be on Microsoft Teams:

Wednesday, July 8: DC&R

Thursday, July 9: Cabinet

Briefing

Friday, July 10: Health and Wellbeing Board

Thursday, July 23: Cabinet

Thursday, August 20: DC&R

Thursday, August 27: South Lakes Highways Working Group

Fond farewell to dedicated councillor, Lawrence Fisher

TRIBUTES have paid to Lawrence Fisher, who died this month.

Lawrence was a dedicated councillor, who will be much missed by his many colleagues and friends in the Conservative Group.

He was elected to Cumbria County Council in 2007, representing Brampton with enormous commitment and enthusiasm, actively enjoying the many meetings he attended - he will be remembered as the Group's 'super sub' - even during his later years, as his health deteriorated.

Born and bred in Carlisle, he was a dedicated ambassador for the city he loved, working as an accountant, raising his family and attending countless meetings and events both in his role as a councillor and, earlier, as a proud consort to his wife Sandra, who served as mayor of Carlisle.

In his youth, Lawrence was a keen sportsman, mainly rugby, swimming and especially cycling.



BLACK TIE: Lawrence enjoying a formal night out

He competed in cycling events all over the country, winning medals and trophies during his time.

Before he died he was writing a book comparing the training methods and equipment of cyclists in the 1950s and 1960s to the present day.

For many years, Lawrence was an enthusiastic volunteer at Carlisle's tourist information centre, helping visitors find accommodations and advising them on what to do and see in the city of which he was so proud.

Prior to becoming a county councillor, Lawrence served as a Carlisle City councillor. He was also a keen and dedicated school governor for many years.

Paying tribute to Lawrence, Conservative Group Leader James Airey said: "Lawrence worked tirelessly for the residents he represented for many years and for the Conservative Group.

"He was our super sub and would jump at the chance to cover for a colleague. He will be missed by us all."

The Conservative Group has made a donation to Eden Valley Hospice in Lawrence's memory, and any members wishing to make a personal donation can do so at:

<https://lawrence-fisher.muchloved.com/>



LAWRENCE FISHER: A dedicated county councillor, who will be missed by his many friends and colleagues

"Lawrence worked tirelessly for the residents he represented for many years and for the Conservative Group"

Contact the Group Office

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As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the way the Council and indeed the Conservative Group operates, please remember the Group Office staff are here to help as we continue to work from home - by phone, Microsoft Teams, Skype and email.

Our working hours are:

Louise: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Lana: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday

Five minutes with... Graham Roberts

FAVOURITE film: *The Servant*, a Harold Pinter film, starring Dirk Bogarde, Sarah Miles, Wendy Craig and James Fox. It's a psychological drama relating to social class.

Favourite TV programme: *Foyle's War*.

Favourite book or play: *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller.

Favourite meal: The ultimate British classic of fish, chips and mushy peas.

Favourite tittle: A nice, crisp G&T.

Favourite music: Jazz.

Favourite place: London. I subscribe to Samuel Johnson's view that "when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

Favourite pastime: Photography.

Most memorable holiday: Monte Carlo, although rumours that I was the man who broke the bank there are sadly unfounded.

Political hero: Margaret Thatcher.

Least favourite politician: Emily Thornberry.

I am at my happiest when I... Am listening to music.

I cook a great... Traditional tattie pot.

I would love to have as a dinner party guest... Richard Branson.

Greatest achievement: Being elected as a county councillor.

Biggest regret: That I didn't become a councillor sooner.

I wish I'd known at 18 that... Life is always uncertain.

My guilty pleasure is: Eating chocolate.

I have got through the Coronavirus lockdown by: Rediscovering my love of calligraphy, which I have taken up again.

