



# Sustainable Keswick

## Annual Report

For the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Registered Charity Number: 1204429

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## Chair's Foreword

What can I say, what a wonderful year! This report is testament to an incredible amount of hard work from our volunteers, both in our core group and also our supporters, many of whom have volunteered their spare time to plan and deliver events and projects which benefit our community and the environment. We couldn't achieve what we do without the support of our partner organisations and funders, many of whom are mentioned in this report. In these times of great despair, the power of communities to address the climate and biodiversity crisis really gives me hope. I hope you enjoy reading this report of our activities over the past 12 months and that you find it a source of inspiration. I would like Sustainable Keswick to be a platform for anyone in our community who wants to make a difference. I'm so proud to be part of this incredible organisation and I hope we continue to go from strength to strength.

Angela Wakefield  
Chair of Sustainable Keswick



# 1. Introduction

We are a group of dedicated volunteers concerned about the threats of climate change and the effect it will have for our future and our children's future. Since we began in 2007 we have been at the forefront of climate activism in Keswick and wider Cumbria. We continue to learn about our environment and the possibilities for a better future. The projects and campaigns that we do at Sustainable Keswick work towards our 3 main goals:

- Reducing carbon emissions
- Improving biodiversity
- Reducing waste

We believe we need to do what we can to try and live in a manner that is sustainable both for the planet and the millions of other species with which we share it. This is an annual report of our activities up to the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. This report is produced for our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and will be shared with our members and partners.

## 2. How we are structured

### 2.1. Our legal status

Sustainable Keswick became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in August 2023. Previously we were an unincorporated community group. Becoming a CIO means that we are able to access grant funding to deliver projects which help us achieve our goals.

### 2.2. Our trustees

The Charities Act (2011) requires us to appoint at least three trustees to provide oversight of our activities. Our trustees are members of our local community and are actively involved in the work of Sustainable Keswick. Our Trustees are currently Guy Huxtable, Robyn Wynn and Terry Sloan who give their time on a voluntary basis.

### 2.3. Our core group

Our core group is comprised of volunteers who take more active involvement in Sustainable Keswick by organising events, leading projects and supporting the general running of the organisation. The core group meets monthly to plan activities and projects. Several core group members are also nominated for specific roles to ensure the effective running of our organisation e.g. Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Communication (emails, social media etc). Keswick Town Council is also represented on our core group.

### 2.4. Our supporters

We are not a membership-based organisation however we do have a large number of supporters who are an important part of what we do. We consider our supporters to include the people who are on our mailing list, who support our work by participating in

events and/or making donations to our cause. We also have a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram which allows our supporters to interact and share information and ideas.

## 2.5. Our relationship with Keswick Town Council

Following the Annual Town Meeting in May 2024, Sustainable Keswick became an outside body to Keswick Town Council (KTC), with Lorraine Taylor as council representative and Natalie Evans joining as representative in December 2024. Having strong links with KTC is important in enabling Sustainable Keswick's work in the community and to support KTC with implementation of their Climate Action Plan.

## 2.6. Our new logo!

Thanks to one of our core group members, Elle, we now have a new logo suite, based on the previous one but much more striking. Thank you, Elle, for all the work that you put into this.

# 3. Sub-group activities

To coordinate our activities, we have formed several sub-groups which focus on specific topics including energy, biodiversity, transport, waste, outreach and campaigning and lobbying. The following sections report on key activities undertaken by these sub-groups over the past 12 months.

## 3.1. Energy

### 3.1.1. Thermal imaging and home energy advice

Futureproof Cumbria, previously Cumbria Action for Sustainability, is a local charity which helps people, communities and organisations tackle the climate crisis by promoting action and supporting change. We are lucky enough to have two Futureproof Cumbria staff members (Tina Holt and Julia Massey) in our core group to facilitate collaboration on projects to support our community to transition to a low carbon, future-ready homes. In partnership with Futureproof Cumbria, 6 volunteers from Sustainable Keswick conducted 24 basic thermal imaging surveys in households in and around Keswick. Feedback from households surveyed suggested this experience was very positive and resulted in people implementing basic actions to address heat loss, e.g. fitting draught excluders, as well as accessing more in-depth advice about retrofit measures. In November 2024, Futureproof Cumbria facilitated 2 pop-up advice sessions at Theatre by the Lake. 25 people attended and received advice on how to access support / grants for simple home improvements, upgrade a home with renewable technologies such as solar and heat pumps, as well as deeper retrofit measures. As a direct result of these community engagement activities, Futureproof Cumbria were able to provide 7 Free Home Energy Support Visits, 3 Home Retrofit Visits (and reports) and support 4 solar PV installations in Keswick.

## 3.2. Biodiversity

### 3.2.1. Elizabeth's Wood

Elizabeth's Wood (named in honour of Elizabeth Barraclough) sits between Fitz Park and Keswick Hospital. The site is owned and managed by Keswick Parks Trust (a charitable entity managed by Keswick Town Council) in partnership with Sustainable Keswick. It is planted with a range of native trees, which are now maturing. In June 2025, Steve Hebblethwaite (Woodland Trust and supporter of Sustainable Keswick) organised a bioblitz at the site, supported by the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre (CBDC). This showed a wide range and number of species are now thriving there.

### 3.2.2. Borrowdale Road Roundabout

Following hard work by Sustainable Keswick volunteers sowing seeds and transplanting plug plants, the 'triangle' of land just north of the road from Keswick to Borrowdale has become a spectacular wildflower meadow, with mallow, oxeye daisies, yellow rattle, willowherb, geranium and many more wildflower species creating a fabulous display. This site is privately owned, with Cumberland Council doing a 'cut and collect' at set points in the year to maximise biodiversity.



**Photo: Wild flowers at Borrowdale Road Roundabout, Credit: Terry Sloan**

### 3.2.3. Springs Road Flood Basin

The site at Springs Road (which also plays a role in natural flood management) has also developed this year. The hedge that was laid last winter is thriving and the trees are growing well. There are wildflowers across the site with species like flag iris, sneezewort and purple loosestrife thriving in the damp conditions in the flood basin. The area is attracting birds and animals – snipe, ducks, deer and ground nesting birds are present, as was a spectacular barn owl in the winter. The deer love the apple trees, so much so that we needed to protect them with mesh cages, thanks to funding from the Woodland



Trust. This site is owned by Cumberland Council who manage the site to ensure it functions as a flood basin. We liaise with Julian Smith from the Cumberland Council Parks and Open Spaces Team regarding the management of the trees, flowers and hedgerows, with support from the Woodland Trust. Whilst there is no public access, we can use the site for events, for example we plan to host an apple day on the site later this autumn. Students from St Herberts school and Keswick school are also using the site for educational purposes.



**Photo: Barn Owl at Springs Road Flood Basin, Credit: Guy Huxtable**

### 3.3. Transport

#### 3.3.1. Active Travel

Sustainable Keswick attended events and provided input to developing strategies and plans associated with promoting Active Travel (walking and cycling) initiatives in the area. This included attending a public meeting in January 2025, organised by the Cumberland Lakes to Sea (L2S) Community Panel. We also provided feedback on Cumberland Council's Bus Service Investment Programme (BSIP) on proposed alterations and suggestions for improving the timing and integration of buses with train services. In September 2024, the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) held a stakeholder meeting to gather views and priorities for an Active Travel Network Plan. This plan was to be included in a funding bid for active travel provision, focusing on connectivity within the network and to public transport. The bid is for funding from the National Park Capability Fund, to help leverage other sources of funding. We outlined what we considered to be the main priorities and issues around active travel to and from Keswick. We provided feedback on the final draft Active Travel Network Plan in March 2025 and the bid was submitted by LDNPA in April 2025. Thanks to Helen Brownlie for her work on this.

#### 3.3.2. Keswick Eco Car Club

Keswick Eco Car Club is a local, member-based initiative that provides residents with access to a self-service, pay as you drive, low-carbon vehicle. It's a convenient and affordable way of using an electric vehicle, without the expense and hassle of owning

one. The Keswick Eco Car Club launched in late December 2024 and is the result of a partnership between Charge My Street (CMS), a Community Benefit Society which installs and operates community EV charge points, and Derwent Valley Car Club (DVCC) who run a community car club based in Blackhall Mill, Gateshead. The project is supported by the Keswick Quakers who are the site hosts, and Sustainable Keswick who are providing volunteers to run the car club. Thanks to a grant from Cumbria Community Foundation, we were able to purchase the electric vehicle which was on loan to us for the pilot phase. There are currently 16 members who collectively used the car for over 700 hours during the first 5 months of operation. This indicates the car club is a welcome asset to the community although more members are needed to ensure the car club is financially viable in the long term.

### 3.3.3. EV Charge Points

Sustainable Keswick is supporting the adoption of low carbon transport technology with the recent installation of a bi-directional electric vehicle charge point at the Quaker Meeting House. The installation has been funded by a UK government innovation fund and is part of a Rural Energy Resilience (RER) Project. The technology is being trialled at 15 sites across Cumbria and the North East. Two of the trial sites, Keswick and Weardale, are also trialling the integration of a community car club (see above). The new charge point technology will enable vehicles to store the electricity generated by the solar PV on the roof of the Quaker Meeting House, when the vehicle is plugged in during the day. The technology will carefully balance the needs of the building and the vehicle, optimising the use of energy generated by the solar panels whilst reducing energy costs. In the event of a power cut, the vehicle can feed electricity back into the building for use during an emergency.



**Photo: Keswick Eco Car Club and the EV Charge Point at the Quaker Meeting House**



## 3.4. Waste

### 3.4.1. Waste-free events

Our waste group has been dormant for the last couple of years as we have been focusing on other priorities, however we have recently been invited to join Keswick Town Council's events committee where we will be providing advice and support to help events to be as sustainable as possible, with waste being a particular focus.

### 3.4.2. Food waste project

We were invited by the North West Net Zero Hub, to participate in a food waste project to consider a micro-anaerobic digestion facility for the Keswick area, building on a previous feasibility study from 2017. We did not have the resource to take advantage of this opportunity and the deadlines for applying for the Community Energy Fund were very short, however this is a topic we would like to explore in future.

## 3.5. Outreach

### 3.5.1. Climate café

The Keswick Climate Cafe meets each month to discuss our deep concerns over the environmental crisis. This year, we have examined what is climate denial and how governments have manipulated agendas to make 'Net Zero' appear to be a simple answer. We have discussed the reports from the international science community that dangerous tipping points are drawing closer and that policies required to confront them are highly complex. Our group are always happy to present ideas for discussion, from the serious loss of biodiversity both on land and in the oceans, to concerns around food security, the importance of soil and how our various ecosystems are steadily being degraded by human behaviour.

### 3.5.2. Green screen

From September 2024 through to April 2025 we worked with Jonathan and Graham at the Alhambra on a season of monthly Green Screens, showing eight in total. We had a cracking start with ***I could never go vegan***, which drew over 50 people. However, since then numbers attending have declined, rarely reaching 40 and sometimes not even 30. We have therefore decided not to continue with the Green Screen initiative as it is not economically viable for the cinema. We anticipate screening next season's films at the Quaker Meeting House, though this has yet to be confirmed.

### 3.5.3. Talks

Joe has given 18 talks on climate change throughout the year. These have included a talk repeated several times on the Ethiopian Famine of the 1980s in which he worked for Oxfam, which, though not caused by climate change, raises many issues on the vulnerability of poor people to extreme weather events. Other talks have been on climate change and migration (***When Climate Change make People Move***), climate change and health (***The Health Hazards of Climate Change***), and climate change and conflict (***When Climate Change makes People Fight***). Audiences have included Penrith Ladies Luncheon Club, the Environment Agency (Penrith), Skiddaw U3A Geopolitics Group, Kendal Quakers, Underbarrow WI, William Howard School

(Brampton) 6<sup>th</sup> Form Philosophy Class and Oxfam House staff. Several more talks are in the pipeline.

#### 3.5.4. Working with schools

Bethany Winwood, a teacher at Keswick School, approached Sustainable Keswick to ask for support on a sustainability project called **Brilliant Cumbria**, funded by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. There were twelve year 9 students in the group with whom Jo and Joe worked on two activities: wildflower seed sowing at the Springs Road Flood Basin, enabled by Pete Leeson from the Woodland Trust, and 'Philosophy for Children' sessions for year 7 students. The philosophy sessions explored the question: *Do I have a responsibility to care for the planet?* Six sessions (one per class) were facilitated by a pair of year 9 students, as well as by Jo, Joe and Bethany. The aim was not to debate and win, but to listen, think and learn. We have agreed to repeat this next year.

We have continued our relationship with Lucy Lake and the eco-leaders at St Herbert's Primary School. In April we supported a '**Playing for Planet Earth**' concert with local band *Water's Edge* at St John's Church, which involved the eco-leaders putting together a checklist of 'to-do' actions that every attendee could undertake. Joe spoke at the concert, as did Rosie, one of the eco-leaders. Emily and Elle also attended helping with the raffle and the bar, which raised £210, of which £70 was donated to Sustainable Keswick. At our last meeting with the eco-leaders in school, a visit was made to the very overgrown pond in the company of Julia Kiggell, an outreach officer from the National Trust, who has agreed to work with next year's eco-leaders to restore it. Finally, in early July the group visited the Springs Road Flood Basin for a wonderful hour with Pete Leeson from the Woodland Trust, learning about wildlife and the many niches which wildlife needs to thrive.

#### 3.5.5. Great Big Green Week

In previous years we have pulled together a large programme of events for Great Big Green Week (GBGW), however this year we chose to focus on our work with Keswick School and the Brilliant Cumbria initiative (see above). However, we did manage to support a number of other local events during this time. Working with Rev. Charles Hope, Terry and Mike Hambrey put together a special service at the end of GBGW on the theme of *Caring for our Common Home*, at which Jo, Joe and Mike each gave a reflection, and the choir sang a beautiful anthem. We were also happy to promote two local farm events on **Open Farm Sunday** during GBGW: Low Netherscales Farm at Embleton, where a new farm shop has recently opened selling local organic produce, and Low Stanger farm at Lorton.

#### 3.5.6. Notes from a Warming World

Sustainable Keswick continued to contribute a fortnightly article for the Keswick Reminder covering a wide variety of topics, from the recent *High Seas Treaty* to *The Tragedy of Rearmament*. Having started at the beginning of 2022, we are now up to No.91. In addition to the Reminder readership, Joe sends the pieces to 90 others around the world who are on his mailing list. The articles are also uploaded onto our website and social media channels.

### 3.5.7. Press releases

We have continued to generate press releases for everything that we have done or plan to do. Most recently the Reminder provided us with a two thirds page spread on the Springs Road Flood Basin, including a magnificent drone image of the whole basin by Tony Stephenson.

## 3.6. Campaigning and Lobbying

Monthly meetings of the campaigning and lobbying group have focused largely on planning topics for the Climate Café. While the relationship with our MP has greatly improved since the election last year, we have not done much lobbying as a group, though individuals have written letters. Earlier in the year, Joe met with our new MP, Marcus Campbell-Savours, together with others from the local Green Party, West Cumbria North Lakes Friends of the Earth, Penrith Action on Climate Transition and North Lakes XR. In August 2024, Sustainable Keswick sent a letter to Cumberland Council (copied to our MP) expressing concern over excessive use of pesticides and herbicides in Keswick, questioning whether it would be possible to introduce alternative, less harmful methods of weed control, as recommended by the Pesticide Action Network. The letter proposed that Keswick be considered for a pilot project to significantly reduce the public use of these chemicals.

This year Cumberland Council published its Climate and Nature Strategy. We were pleased to be part of a discussion about the delivery and continued development of the strategy in a meeting with Cumberland Council and Keswick Town Council representatives in the Town Hall in September. We were thrilled that Sally Lansbury was elected to represent Keswick on Cumberland Council in October 2024. Prior to this Sally was an elected member of Keswick Town Council and Allerdale Borough Council and was heavily involved in the work of Sustainable Keswick, particularly the biodiversity sub-group. Sally continues to be an enthusiastic supporter of our work.

## 4. Partners

As described above, Sustainable Keswick works with a wide variety of partners who support the delivery of our work. We would like to thank the following organisations for their ongoing support:

- Alhambra Cinema
- Charge My Street
- Cockermouth Climate Action Now
- Cumberland Council
- Cumbria Community Foundation
- Cumbria Sustainability Network
- Derwent Valley Car Club
- Futureproof Cumbria
- Keswick Quakers
- Keswick School
- Keswick Town Council

- St Herberts Primary School
- West Cumbria Rivers Trust
- Woodland Trust

It's great to know we are not alone in our endeavours; there are over 20 different groups in the **Cumbria Sustainability Network** who are all working hard in their respective communities to address climate change, biodiversity loss and advocate for social justice. We would like to thank Helen Attewell from Futureproof Cumbria for her hard work in coordinating this network which provides an essential service to help connect these groups.

## 5. Finances

### 5.1. Accounts

Overall, our finances are healthy. At the end of the Financial Year (4<sup>th</sup> April 2025) we had £3,468.66 cash in the bank. Our income consists of donations from individuals, Allerdale Lottery and capital grants. We have £551.44 of donations in a Go Fund Me charity account, which we have yet to receive. Our outgoings have been limited to meeting room hire and comms and engagement activities and expenditure associated with Keswick Eco Car Club.

### 5.2. Grants

This financial year we have received grants of £244.40 from Futureproof Cumbria to support our Great Big Green Week activities in 2024, and £15,000 from Cumbria Community Foundation (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) for the purchase of the Keswick Eco Car Club electric vehicle.

### 5.3. Fundraising

In the past we have relied on ad hoc donations, legacies and grants to deliver our work. However, this year we decided we needed to raise more core funds to support the general costs of running our organisation. We set up a Go Fund Me site (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-keswicks-future>) and through this we have received a generous donation from Lily Arkwright; a sustainable jewellery company based in the UK: <https://www.timesandstar.co.uk/news/25127988.lake-district-jeweller-donates-500-sustainable-keswick/>. We would like to thank Lily Arkwright for their donation, which we intend to use to purchase items to support our outreach work.

Date on statement	Item	Income	Expenditure	Bank
	<b>Opening Balance</b>			<b>£4,530.03</b>
10/04/2024	Chq. expenses for giving talk Joe H	50		
24/04/2024	Barrnon Media for Climate Café Advert		55.44	
08/05/2024	Allerdale Lottery	21.5		
24/05/2025	Chq. expenses for giving talk Joe H	50		
24/05/2024	Barrnon Media for Climate Café Advert		55.44	
24/05/2024	St Herberts CofE Primary and Nursery School		200	
11/06/2024	Allerdale Lottery	16		
12/06/2024	Barrnon Media for Coffee Talk Advert		32.4	
12/06/2014	Barrnon Media for Bioblitz Advert		32.4	
12/06/2014	Barrnon MediGBGW Advert		129.6	
26/06/2024	Barrnon Media for Climate Café Advert		55.44	
01/07/2024	CAfS Grant for GBGW	244.4		
02/07/2024	Allerdale Lottery	16		
08/08/2024	Allerdale Lottery	20		
13/08/2024	Quaker Meeting House Room Hire		300	
09/09/2024	Markel Insurance		145.6	
10/09/2024	Allerdale Lottery	10		
13/09/2024	Chq. expenses for giving talk Joe H	50		
16/09/2024	Chq. expenses for giving talk Joe H	50		
01/10/2024	Monthly Donation DD	25		
07/10/2024	Barrnon Media Adverts for Climate Café and Sept Green Screen		162	
15/10/2024	Allerdale Lottery	5		
21/11/2024	Robyn Wynn for Annual Zoom Subscription		156	
01/11/2024	Monthly Donation DD	25		
05/11/2024	Barrnon Media Advert Oct Green Screen		78	
12/11/2024	Allerdale Lottery	4		
12/11/2024	Barrnon Media for Climate Café Advert		32	
02/12/2024	Monthly Donation DD	25		
02/12/2024	Allerdale Lottery	4		
09/12/2024	Barrnon Media Advert Nov Green Screen		27	
12/12/2024	DJ Web Hosting Annual Hosting Charge		100	
24/12/2024	Barrnon Media Advert Dec Green Screen		27	
02/01/2025	Monthly Donation DD	25		
14/01/2025	Allerdale Lottery	5		
17/01/2025	Cumbria Community Foundation	15,000		
22/01/2025	Car Club Expenses to Angela Wakefield		118.93	
03/02/2025	Monthly Donation DD	25		
03/02/2025	Bank transfer for DVCC purchase of EV		15,025	
11/02/2025	Allerdale Lottery	4		
12/02/2025	Barrnon Media Advert Jan Green Screen		27	
03/03/2025	Monthly Donation DD	25		
04/03/2025	Allerdale Lottery	4		
06/03/2025	PACT Donation for Joe's talk	30		
11/03/2025	Barrnon Media Adverts Feb Green Screen and Climate Café		61.02	
01/04/2025	Monthly Donation DD	25		

Total income and expenditure and difference tax year 2024-5	<b>£15,758.90</b>	<b>£16,820.27</b>
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Difference between start and end of tax year	<b>-£1,061.37</b>
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Closing bank balance on 5/4/2025	<b>£3,468.66</b>
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