

# Farlam Parish Village News

Spring Edition March to May 2026



Welcome to the Spring edition of the Parish newsletter. Around 120 people attended a lively public meeting on 3rd February in Hallbankgate to discuss significant environmental damage to around 6 acres of land at Midgeholme which contained sections of the historic Lord Carlisle Railway. This is an area popular with walkers, horse riders and cyclists and despite brownfield areas, a haven for biodiversity.

Cumberland Councillor Dobson and Chris Woodley-Stewart, Director of North Pennines National Landscape Partnership outlined the scope of the damage and the lack of approval by the planning authority and other relevant organisations. The landowner Mr. Michael Newberry also attended and apologised for the upset that his actions had caused, and he informed the meeting that he had drawn up plans and begun working to try and restore the area.

His intention appears to have been to improve drainage in the area and clear up accumulated waste that existed prior to his ownership. It also emerged that he was thinking of building some workshops and housing.

Chris Marsh from Farlam Parish Council chaired the meeting and directed lots of questions to panel members from those present.

The clear message to Mr. Newberry was to stop trying to restore the site and enter a dialogue with the Planning Authority and the relevant agencies to decide on the best way forward; agree appropriate remedial actions in consultation with them and the community and to adopt a nature first approach. This approach was preferable to enforcement action which remained a possibility. Councillor Dobson said that he would keep the community informed of progress.

Subsequently a follow-up public meeting took place in Hallbankgate on 17th February. Details on pages 8 and 9.

## Hallbankgate Village School News

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We had a busy end to 2025 at Hallbankgate Village School with our Christmas performance of Children of the World for parents and family members, as well as all of the usual festive fun! Before we finished for the Christmas holidays, we were rewarded for all of our hard work with a festive Christmas party (complete with a special visitor, all the way from the North Pole!), a trip to watch a theatre performance of Little Red Riding Hood for Key Stage 2 and The Great Christmas Wrapping Disaster for Early Years and Key Stage 1.

To help spread some Christmas cheer and think of others, we performed carols and Christmas songs at the Brampton Community Centre Christmas lunch and made another donation to Brampton Food Bank. Our active Parents and Friends Association had a busy end to the year too, raising lots of funds for our school through our Christmas raffle, community wreath-making evening and our community Torchlight Procession to remember the mining history of the village. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who attended these events and supported our school.

Since returning to school following the Christmas break, we've had lots of exciting learning opportunities. In Key Stage 2, we started the term by taking part in the Keswick-based Words By the Water writing competition. This year's focus was the theme of 'loss' or 'lost' and we created some very unique and inspiring entries. In Year 5 and 6, we used the poem 'Lucy Gray' by William Wordsworth as inspiration for our emotive and powerful narrative poems. We built vocabulary banks and played with similes, personification and metaphors to describe the setting and feelings around being lost on a stormy, snowy moor and our entries were very, very effective.

In Year 3 and 4, we imagined that we were looking back on how the beauty of the Lake District has slowly been lost due to pollution and climate change. We integrated short poems within the narratives to mirror the key messages within each paragraph which was a brilliant opportunity to stretch our skills in description and figurative language. In Early Years and Key Stage 1, we have really enjoyed basing our literacy learning on Where the Wild Things Are. We worked hard to imagine and describe lots of interesting story settings (such as the jungle or a snowy scene) before integrating these into our writing. We are so proud of our stories!

Looking ahead to the next term, we are looking forward to the weather warming up a little bit so that we can begin to prepare the vegetable garden and greenhouse: we all enjoyed eating the fruit and vegetables that we had grown last year and we have grand plans for what we would like to grow this year. We're also looking forward to working out what to spend our gardening gift voucher on: this was the prize for achieving 'outstanding curriculum enhancement' from Cumbria in Bloom in the autumn of 2025.

All of this contributes to our ongoing awareness of looking after our planet and supports the work and efforts of our Eco Club and Eco Council. This term, we've been incredibly busy: we have taken part in the RSPB's Big School Birdwatch and been inspired to look at ways of increasing the number birds into our school grounds. We have been collecting bird food and feeders over the last couple of weeks and, in STEM club, we've been using online technology to create 3D designs of bird boxes, too! We hope to be able to make some in the coming months.

**Dates for your diaries:** We have a couple of community events coming up, including a community quiz night on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March and our annual community fete on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June. Look out for posters in the Hub or on our school Facebook page for more details.

**If you would like to find out more about our school, please visit**

[www.hallbankgate.org.uk](http://www.hallbankgate.org.uk)

**Our weekly newsletter is jam-packed with photographs and information about what we have been learning about.**



### **Hallbankgate Village School Places (Nursery to year 6)**

With so many unique learning opportunities at Hallbankgate Village School, please get in touch if you would like to arrange a visit for you and your child to see what our school has to offer.

**Our Playgroup for under 4's takes place each week - watch out for updates on our school Facebook page. All welcome.**

### **Farlam 100 Plus Club Prize Winners**

The 100 Plus Club exists to raise funds to help maintain Farlam Church and the graveyard. Over 100 members take part in the monthly draw. Additional members are always welcome to join.

For further information contact Ann Freer on 016977 46933 or email [bgfreer@mac.com](mailto:bgfreer@mac.com). Alternatively download the membership form at [farlamparishchurch.co.uk](http://farlamparishchurch.co.uk) and send it to Ann Freer by email. A big thank you to existing members for their continued support.

	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
<b>1st prize £25.00</b>	<b>Rebecca Dickens</b>	<b>Pauline Shaw</b>	<b>Remy Stewart</b>
<b>2nd prize £15.00</b>	<b>Brian Murphy</b>	<b>Kathleen Beesley</b>	<b>Nora Jackson</b>
<b>3rd prize £10.00</b>	<b>Nicola Potts</b>	<b>Kathleen Smith</b>	<b>Bill Armstrong</b>

## **Church Matters: Three Rivers Mission Community Team Ministry**

### **Team Rector: Vacant**

The Team Rector has pastoral responsibility for the parishes of Brampton, Irthington, Crosby-on-Eden and Scaley. Church Wardens of St. Thomas à Becket Church (Farlam Church in Kirkhouse) are Gerry Bolton ( Mob. 07578 404500 Email: [gabolton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gabolton@hotmail.co.uk)) and Christine Mineham.

### **Forthcoming Services at Farlam Church in March 2026**

**Sunday 1st March at 11:00am Lay Led Morning Prayer**

**Sunday 15th March at 11:00am Holy Communion Rev'd Allison Lee**

**Sunday 29th March at 9.30am United Service at Cumwhitton with Rev'd Peter Dixon**

**Sunday 5th April (Easter Sunday) at 11.00am Lay Led Morning Prayer**

**Sunday 19th April at 11.00am Holy Communion Rev'd Allison Lee**



Services at **Farlam Church** usually take place at 11:00am on the first and third Sundays of the month. All are welcome to join us. When there is no service at Farlam we encourage people to worship instead at Talkin Church where services are usually held on each Sunday at 9:15am.

For more information please see our website [farlamparishchurch.co.uk](http://farlamparishchurch.co.uk) or check out events at Farlam and Talkin church on the [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) website.

**Farlam Church usually has a simple 20 minute service of Morning prayer (using the book of Common Prayer) at 9:00am each Monday.**

### **Church News**

Last November's Remembrance Sunday was a very wet and windy affair. The service was lay led by Tim Arndt with 9 in attendance for the Observances at the war memorial, followed by a Morning Prayer service inside which ended with a rousing rendition of the national anthem, followed by hot refreshments.

The annual Christmas Fair held in Hallbankgate Village Hall last November was quieter than previous years and visitors seemed to be more careful about their spending. Farlam Church had its own table and managed to take £112 over the two days, so thank you to those who helped us reach that total.

We didn't have a Christmas Carol Service due to the difficulty getting a priest to lead it and also the likelihood of not having enough people to sing. However Liz Gough very kindly led a Christmas Eve communion service at 4:00pm for the 9 people who attended.

**Amelia Grace Thompson was baptised on 7th December by Rev'd Ben Phillips.**

Winter is normally the most difficult time to get people into the church but worship continues with visiting clergy coming to take services.

Sadly our congregation has shrunk in recent years due to people passing away or leaving the area.

The average congregation at Sunday services is 8 so there is a need to attract more people into the church and also much younger members of the community.

Our Parochial Church Council met in November and February with the discussion focussed on the upkeep of the church. There are lots of things that need doing many of which were listed in our Quinquennial Report of 2024. Not surprisingly most of them are expensive, for example £30,000 is required to re-point the south and west walls of the church. The diocesan advisory committee has been very helpful giving us expert guidance on the main issues such as removing the damp plaster, allowing for wheelchair access and general maintenance of the church.

As we head into 2026 and Springtime, the snowdrops will soon be followed by daffodils and our own thoughts will turn to gardening and also the maintenance of the churchyard. The Archdeacon made it clear that it needs to be kept tidy and fully accessible for families to visit relatives' graves. The return of the Community Payback team remains uncertain at present and we issued an appeal for volunteers to help out. If you can spare a couple of hours a week to help keep the grass in check then please get in touch (contact details below) so we can get organised before the grass starts to grow.

Looking ahead we hope to hold our annual plant sale in May and in the meantime Sunday services continue as before. Lay led services are now much more familiar to us with Gerry Bolton and myself acting as our lay leaders. Over the Winter we both have had a lot of practice and are gaining in confidence in our new role and taking it in turn to hold non-communion services when a priest is unavailable.

The Parochial Church Council, the Churchwardens and the congregation, are smaller in numbers and getting older but are no less committed and enthusiastic. We are doing our best to keep the church in good order to serve the community and remain available for worship, fellowship, weddings, christenings and inevitably funerals.

If you would like to join us whether for worship or to help out to keep the churchyard neat and tidy then you would be very welcome.

Tim Arndt, Secretary Farlam PCC - email: [arn1157](mailto:arn1157) or

Gerry Bolton, Church Warden - email: [gabolton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gabolton@hotmail.co.uk) or Mob. 07578 404500

### **Helpers Required for Local Youth Work**

The Rev'd Ben Phillips is looking for volunteers help out with youth work in the area. He has been contrasting the range of youth clubs, scouts and other clubs which were available to him as a youngster with the lack of similar groups in our community today which can give kids something to do that contributes to their well-being and sense of social responsibility.

Carlisle diocese employs a full-time youth worker in the area who runs youth groups in Longtown and Brampton. Parish Councils help with expenses. The Youth Worker regularly goes into schools and takes kids on activities throughout the year. Support from local volunteers to help with the youth club sessions would be welcome as would some administrative support.

If you'd like to help then please get in touch with me:

Ben Phillips, Vicar, Rural Dean, The Vicarage, Lanercost priory, Brampton CA8 2HQ Tel.no. 07936 099123

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If you would like to advertise or sponsor an issue, please email:  
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Revenue raised helps reduce our print costs.

The newsletter is delivered to over 350 homes in the Parish and is published online at:

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## Farlam Parish Council Activity

The Parish Council met on 10th September 2025. Present were Cllrs. C. Marsh (Chairman), A. Broomhead, S. Bird, S. Lingard, J. Brown and P. Scott. In attendance were A. Potts, Clerk and Cumberland Councillor Roger Dobson. No members of the public were present.

After the normal procedural formalities Councillor Dobson spoke about the 60th anniversary of the Pennine Way which stretches 268 miles across England's wild northern uplands; the request to Government from both Cumberland and Westmorland Councils to delay the mayoral election for the new Cumbria Mayoral Combined Authority to May 2027 (subsequently approved) to co-incide with town and parish council elections and thereby save the two councils around £1m.; he also talked about the launch of the Roof of England footpath, a new 188 mile circular walking trail developed by the North Pennines National Landscape team - a challenging multi-day route starting and finishing in Appleby-in-Westmorland.

The Council noted the bank balance of £21,859.34 as at 14/08/25 and authorised expenditure totalling £515.51 salary for the Clerk; £858.33 invoice for the grass cutting contractor; £251.25 subscription to Cumbria Association of local councils; £43.00 on flowers for the planters; and £10.00 bank charges payable to HSBC. The minutes state that all these payments were declined by the bank without informing the Clerk.

The minutes record that a piece of play area equipment was removed and that funding is needed to replace it; the timing of the installation of the second SID is still to be resolved and that the Speedwatch campaign remains active; also an emergency plan is ready to be adopted however it is not clear from the minutes what it involves or how would affect residents.

Various routine administrative matters were also noted before the meeting closed. The last item discussed were legal issues relating to the play area site. As this was considered confidential the discussion is not reflected in the published minutes.

The next meeting was on 12th November 2025. Cllrs. Marsh, Burd, Lingard, Brown and Scott were present along with A. Potts, Clerk and 3 members of the public.

The Chairman informed the members of the sad passing of Councillor Alison Broomhead. She was held in high regard as a councillor and known for enthusiasm, politeness and also her smile. She will be greatly missed. Condolences were sent to Alison's husband.

It was noted that 3 members of the public were present to express the urgent need for action about speeding in several hazardous areas that have been made known to Highways. Agreed that the speeding issue needed to be a priority. No further news about the SID was available.

Bank balance at 28.10.25 of £21,859.34 was noted. It was agreed to pay the Clerk's wages of £1100.14, the grass contractor's invoices for grass cutting and maintenance work at the playground totalling £1859.16, £60.00 for the website, £241.25 to Calc subscription, and to reimburse the Clerk for miscellaneous expenditure totalling £51.45 and also £10.00 HSBC bank charges. Again these payments were rejected by HSBC as they had closed the Council's account.

Other items discussed included feedback from Councillor Lingard on a meeting relating to Speedwatch, the delivery and installation of the SID near the school, the adoption of the emergency plan effective from 1/12/25, followed by a further confidential discussion on legal matters relating to the play area. The date of the next meeting was on 14th January 2026. The minutes are yet to be published.

## Cumberland Councillor Roger Dobson



The start of 2026 has been exceptionally busy. First came the icy weather in the second week of January, followed swiftly by the serious situation at Midgeholme - now making national headlines in *The Sunday Telegraph* under the banner "Beauty spot turned into bomb-site."

During the cold snap I was inundated with emails and phone calls from distressed residents reporting that salt piles had not been replenished.

The school bus became stuck at Forest Head, and several people were effectively trapped in their homes. Farlam, Hayton and Midgeholme parishes contain the highest land in the Carlisle area - the highest road reaches 288 metres (or 950 feet in old money). Most of our roads are not on the Council's gritting routes, and we rely heavily on residents spreading salt at vulnerable points. Two years ago, the Council decided to replace traditional salt piles with more environmentally secure salt bins. Unfortunately, the new bins have yet to materialise. After a phone call to an embarrassed Highways Director, we saw the first-ever visit of a gritter to Forest Head, Talkin and Farlam, followed by a programme of saltpile replenishment. A welcome intervention, albeit overdue.

### The Lord Carlisle Railway – A More Complex Challenge

The problems at Midgeholme are far more complicated. Sustrans - now rebranded as the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust - recently sold a 6.3 acre parcel of land containing part of the historic Lord Carlisle Railway at auction for £19,500. The buyer, a gentleman from Newcastle upon Tyne, arrived last month with a twenty-two tonne excavator and set about the site like an infant with a new toy.



Whether he is a rogue developer or simply extraordinarily naïve remains to be seen, but what is clear is that he undertook major works without planning permission, within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and without consulting the many agencies with responsibilities for this landscape. We do not yet know the full extent of the environmental damage, particularly to nearby watercourses.

Cumberland Council is now leading a multiagency group to assess the situation and plan remediation with the aim of restoring the site as closely as possible to its original condition.

I am grateful to the many residents who contacted me promptly. Their swift action enabled me to meet with the Council Leader and Chief Executive and secure a relatively rapid intervention. The turnout of 125 people at the public meeting in Hallbankgate was extraordinary and has given real momentum to the campaign to address this appalling vandalism and, more importantly, to protect the future of Lord Carlisle's Railway as a multiuser trail and valued community asset.

Although the new landowner, Mr Newberry, offered to sell the land for £50,000 - a suggestion met with understandable derision - raising funds for a community buyout will nevertheless be considered.

## **Who Is Really at Fault?**

The deeper issue lies with Sustrans/WWCT. They purchased this land with public money and have now sold it in a manner entirely at odds with their stated purpose, and without any consultation with the local community or the local authority. This episode has exposed a worrying vulnerability for small communities like Midgeholme.

## **The need for local representation**

Many people assume wrongly that Midgeholme is part of Farlam Parish Council. Midgeholme Parish Council became dormant around 2011 and Midgeholme parish currently has no formal representation. I have discussed with Council officers whether Midgeholme could be merged with Farlam. Their view is that this could be considered as part of a parish boundary review planned after the next elections in May 2027. In the shorter term, a more immediate solution may be to revive Midgeholme Parish Council, as neighbouring Hartleyburn has successfully done across the Northumberland border. To do this, we would need three to five volunteers who live in Midgeholme or within three miles of the parish boundary.

## **Follow up Public Meeting held on 17th February in Hallbankgate**

Cumberland Councillor Roger Dobson chaired the meeting. He introduced Ted Liddle a countryside access advocate and former surveyor for Sustrans and Kieran Foster, Access Officer for the Byways & Bridleways Trust.

Mr. Newberry, the landowner had been in touch with Councillor Dobson to explain his perspective and his willingness to allow limited access across the land and that this offer would expire if not accepted in the near future. Councillor Dobson also explained that he had written to Sustrans (now known as Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust) effectively criticising the way that they had handled the sale by putting it up for auction without informing the relevant authorities and local people and also for not placing any restrictions on subsequent landowners. The response from the Trust simply stated that they had acted properly to raise funds for the Trust from land that they no longer required.

Mr. Liddle then spoke about his involvement in surveying the proposed Sustrans Alston to Brampton via Lambley route and subsequent purchase of various tracts of land and agreements with landowners to allow access along a reconstructed Lord Carlisle Railway route for all: a 'Greenway' rather than a right of way or a bridleway or a cycle track. Sustrans subsequently lost interest in the project. He suggested that it was feasible for interested citizens to set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) to raise funds and using his original documents work to recreate a Greenway route that followed the original rail route.

Keiran Foster also supported this option as a viable way forward. Key to success would be the assembly of an evidence base created by local people who can testify that they had used the route as a bridleway, or a walkway or for cycling over the last 20 years or more. Ultimately this could lead to a public enquiry and compulsory purchase from a reluctant landowner. He gave a recent example of this happening and spoke about the ability of parish councils to designate bridleways.

Councillor Dobson's closing remarks mentioned that there would be a multi-agency meeting on 19th February to agree their approach prior to meeting Mr. Newberry. Those present approved his suggestion that the next step should be a further public meeting to establish a CIC, appoint committee members, agree its aims and objectives and to work with the Parish Council to designate the Lambley to Brampton route as a community asset or public right of way. Date to be announced.

# Hallbankgate Sports News 1888

A meeting took place in the schoolroom on Friday 30th August at which it was unanimously agreed to form an Athletic Club for Hallbankgate. C.L.Thompson Esq. was elected as President and the following gentlemen were elected Vice-Presidents: Rev. C.F Gunton, C. Howard Esq., James Thompson Esq., T. E. B. Thompson Esq., M.J. Thompson Esq., C. H. Thompson Esq., and J.C. Swan Esq.

It was decided to commence football at once and Mr. J. Rundle was elected Captain and Mr. E. Orton Hon. Secretary. Subscriptions were set at 1/- for playing members and 5/- for honorary members.

The following football matches were subsequently arranged: Oct. 27th Hallbankgate vs. Brampton (2nd team) at home & Feb. 2nd away; Nov. 17th HBG vs. St. Mary's Carlisle at home & Jan. 5th away; Nov. 24th HBG vs. Cowan Sheldonians at Carlisle & Jan. 19th at home; Dec. 1st HBG vs. South Vale Wanderers at home & Feb. 12th away.



It was also decided to commence cricket next season and if funds allowed other athletic exercises. By December that year it was reported that the cricket ground on the moss was taking shape. Members now found that football at the Via was possible with less risk of broken bones than was the case on the moss.



3 matches had been played and sadly all were lost and well lost, but team spirits had not been dampened and hopes were high that they would win one day! Critics had commented that Hallbankgate had been outweighed and suggested that local heavyweight wrestlers might come to the team's aid.

The Committee decided to hold a dance at the end of each match in future with the receipts going towards defraying the expenses of railway fares paid to teams playing away from home. To date £1.5s.6d had been received from subscriptions.

The newly formed Hallbankgate Cricket Club fared better than the footballers and won their away match against Halton-Le-Gate on 31st May 1890.

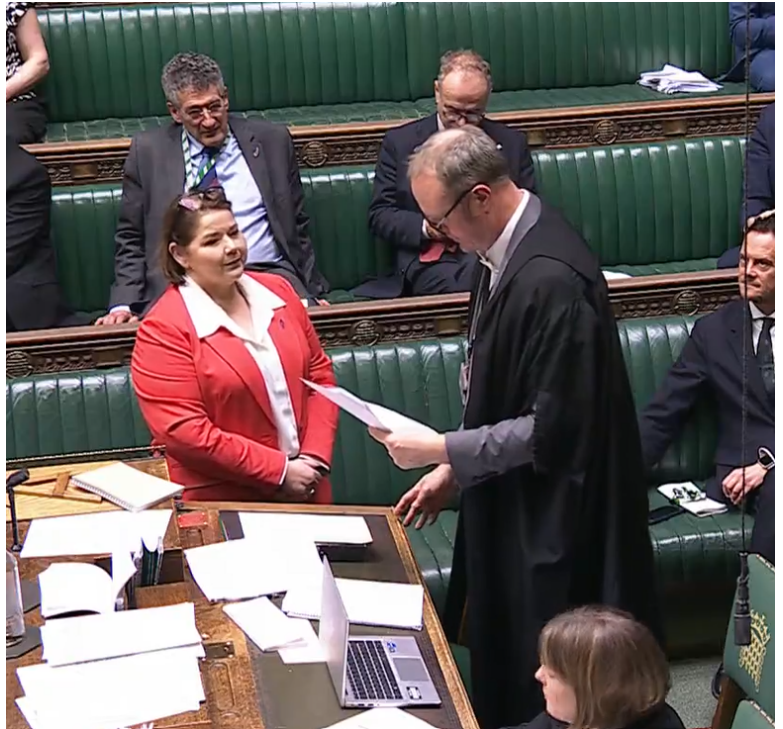


<b>Hallbakgate</b>	<b>Halton-Le gate</b>
<b>Jas. Stobart b Birtwhistle ... .. 1</b>	<b>Robt. Dodd c J. Armstrong b Bayley ... .. 3</b>
<b>Robt. Bell c J. Carr b Baldwin .... 4</b>	<b>J. Stalker run out ... .. 1</b>
<b>Wm. Anson c J. Ritson b Birtwhistle ... 0</b>	<b>H. Wharton b Bayley ... .. 0</b>
<b>A. Bayley (Capt.) not out ... .. 19</b>	<b>J. Wharton b Bayley ... .. 3</b>
<b>Ed. Steel b Birtwhistle ... .. 3</b>	<b>M. Todd b Bayley ... .. 0</b>
<b>C. Hardy b Baldwin ... .. 1</b>	<b>M. Baldwin (Capt.) st Jas. Stobart ... .. 3</b>
<b>John Stobbart run out .... 0</b>	<b>J. Railton b Bayley ... .. 0</b>
<b>J. Nixon c Wharton b Baldwin ... .. 1</b>	<b>J. W. Carr b Bayley ... .. 0</b>
<b>J. Armstrong b Wharton ... .. 0</b>	<b>Birtwhistle b Bayley ... .. 0</b>
<b>J. McCormack c Stalker b Baldwin ... .. 0</b>	<b>F. Ritson c J. Armstrong b Jas. Stobbart ... .. 1</b>
<b>T. Armstrong c Wharton b Birtwhistle ... 2</b>	<b>W. Armstrong not out ... .. 1</b>
<b>Extras ... .. 2 Total 34</b>	<b>Extras ... .. 2 Total 14</b>

## Julie Minns MP

Being your voice in Parliament is a role that goes far beyond sitting on the green benches in the House of Commons chamber. It involves meeting with Ministers to raise the specific concerns of our area, working alongside local charities to support the vulnerable, and fighting for the North Cumbria businesses that drive our economy. While local issues like rural broadband and the resilience of our mobile networks are always at the very top of my priority list for Farlam, I want to share more of the work I am doing in Westminster that I believe will help our local community and our country.

One of the ways MPs can take direct action is by introducing our own legislation. Recently, I introduced a Bill in Parliament to ban the sale of dangerous, high-speed, illegal e-bikes. While Farlam does not see the same daily prevalence of these "monster bikes" as Carlisle city centre, the issue is very relevant for us. These bikes have become a catalyst for wider crime; their high speeds and lack of number plates make them the perfect tool for criminals to disappear down lanes and tracks where police cars cannot easily follow. By ridding our county of these machines, we are not just tackling a road safety nuisance but cutting off a resource for criminals operating across North Cumbria.



That is why the North Cumbria Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, David Allen, and 28 other police commissioners back my Bill. Locally, David Allen has been leading the action to seize and crush illegal e-bikes as part of Operation Colossus, but we need the law to stop them from reaching our streets in the first place.

I also introduced another Bill to make sure our democracy is truly open to everyone. The Elections (Accessibility for Blind Voters) Bill would require the provision of audio and tactile measures at polling stations. This is a vital step toward making sure that blind and partially sighted voters can cast their ballots independently and in secret.

Alongside my own Bills, I am busy supporting a wide range of Government reforms that deliver real change for our region. This includes the "Make Work Pay" package to strengthen employment rights, alongside moves to freeze prescription charges and rail fares, and deliver five million extra NHS appointments. Locally, I am delighted that ten schools across Carlisle and North Cumbria have received Government funding for free breakfast clubs, and I was proud to vote to scrap the two-child benefit limit, which will lift 2,050 children across Carlisle and North Cumbria out of poverty. We are also making progress on the historic Renters' Rights Act, a new road safety plan to reduce road deaths by 65% by 2035, and tough action to tackle illegal immigration, with the latest figures showing 58,500 illegal immigrants have been removed in the last 18 months. Whether it is meeting with local business owners or fighting for our charities in Parliament, I remain committed to delivering change for our community and our country.

## Hallbankgate Women's Institute



### Winter Update

We have had a busy winter at the WI which included local speakers, Christmas festivities and some special milestone celebrations. Below are our highlights:

### November

We were delighted to welcome Hrishikesh Desai, Patron Chef at Farlam Hall, to our November meeting. Hrishikesh provided a fantastic talk which touched on his childhood, education, his passion and love for food and cooking and how that led him on an around the world journey to our little corner off the planet. It was so interesting to hear all about his journey and he provided some wonderful insights following a Q&A session which I think could have lasted all night!

### Special Milestone Celebrations

At our November meeting we presented special milestone awards to five of our very valued members and Hrishikesh was delighted to present the certificates on our behalf. These were:



Nora Jackson - 70+years



Hazel Williamson 50+ years



Jenny Ritson - 40+years



Elizabeth Gough 40+ years



Sandra Forster - 30+ years

# Hallbankgate WI

## December

During December we had our Christmas meal at the Belted Will in Hallbankgate which was delicious as always! We felt it was really important to support our local village pub, and everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We received a very warm welcome from the wonderful team at the pub, and I think some did not want the evening to end!

## January




January saw us back in the Belted Will for our usual meeting and again we had a lovely evening with our sandwiches and chip supper. During this meeting one of our members, Norah Jackson recited a poem that she had written for the WI in around about 1978! It was delightful to hear this and we felt we had to share it with you. So, with permission from Norah to share this, I hope you delight in reading this as much as we did:

On Thursday night come along with me and forget about your colour TV  
It's WI in the Village Hall where everyone will have a ball  
October's our Annual General Meeting where you'll receive a very warm greeting  
In December you can go to the Christmas dinner - if it doesn't snow  
In May or June, when it is sunny we have a coffee evening to make money  
In other months, if you care to come, you'll find we have lots of fun  
There's choice of things that you can do - badminton darts and rounders too  
Our members all are very nice - the oldest one I think is called Alice  
There are three Norah's with a H and two Anne's with and E  
And most important the president Betty  
There's Mary who makes a delicious birthday cake and Audrey who's good with the garden rake  
There's Watsons aplenty the youngest just twenty  
And many more whom you'll adore  
So come along and make a date with the WI ladies of Hallbankgate

I think it's fair to say that things haven't changed much and it's fantastic to see such lovely traditions that have carried on for decades. And even more fantastic that we have ladies that remember these early days and can share their stories with us

## Looking Ahead: February & Beyond

Upcoming speakers include:

 Date	 Speaker	 Topic
February 26 <sup>th</sup>	No speaker as we have our	Bring & Buy fundraising event
March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Carlisle Foodbank	The vital role that foodbanks play in supporting our communities
April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	No speaker as we have our	Annual General Meeting

## Join Us!

We are in the process of finalising our 2026/27 programme and will share this with you in the next edition. We are always looking to welcome new ladies so if you are new to the area and are looking to make new friends or if you have been here for a while and looking for warmth and connection please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Warm wishes, Alison Cheetham President, Hallbankgate WI

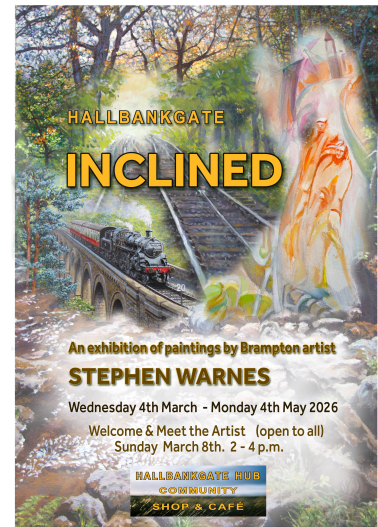
## Hallbankgate Hub Update

It's 10 years since the Co-Op shut its doors after trading for over 100 years and the community bought the shop and opened the volunteer run Hub. It hasn't been an easy ride but the Hub is a hive of local activity. It continues to thrive and provide people with a warm and welcoming space to meet, shop, chat, or just relax with a very good cup of coffee.

The Hub is an important part of our community: taken together with our popular pub, our busy village hall and our first rate primary school, these assets make Farlam parish a great place to live. We are planning to celebrate our 10th birthday this year so look out for the details as we want everyone to celebrate with us.

Meanwhile the shop continues to provide a wide variety of groceries and support local businesses: Hallbankgate Honey, Eva's Organics, Ivegill herb farm and butcher Steve Wilson's meat and pies. Fresh fruit and vegetables are delivered daily. You can save money and help the environment by bringing your own containers to refill from our wide range of herbs, spices, soaps and detergent. We also have a Post Office operating one day a week, a book exchange/library, a school uniform stand and collect for the local food bank. Not only that but you can arrange an appointment with Heather our beauty and holistic therapist who visits each week.

The gallery holds regular exhibitions of local art and our next artist is Stephen Warrens from Brampton. His exhibition is entitled **Hallbankgate Inclined**, a play on words by Stephen that references the Hallbankgate incline which brought empty coal wagons along the railway track from Kirkhouse. The exhibition runs from the 4th March to 4th May. Pop in and meet the artist on Sunday 8th March between 2:00 and 4:00 pm: all welcome. On 27th February we are starting **Cuppa Social**, a weekly opportunity to meet people, have a chat, play cards or do a jigsaw. Finally we are always looking for new volunteers to help out. If you'd like to help out phone 01697 746060 to find out what's involved.



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## News from RSPB Geltsdale

2025 has seen something of a roller coaster Hen Harrier breeding season. We had a fairly early start with promising interactions between male and female birds by late March and it soon became clear that there were at least two possible pairs setting up territories on opposite sides of the reserve and occasional sightings of two other females. By 6<sup>th</sup> April nest building had started on the northern part of the reserve closely followed by behaviour suggesting that the female had started laying.



Female from the successful nest

At the same time a second pair had set up territory in the southern part of the reserve and nest building was also taking place there. All was looking good for a successful breeding season but sadly in early May the male from the southern nest disappeared while out hunting and the female abandoned the nest soon after.



One of the males that disappeared

We are also hoping that the new platform will be used by a pair of ospreys when they return from Africa in the Spring. It's early days as the platform was only erected last year but it is great that it is getting some interest already!

A week later the male from the northern nest also vanished. Two days later the sitting female was showing signs that she might be preparing to desert the nest, and the decision was made to supply supplementary food.

It is unusual for a female to take such food before the eggs have hatched but thankfully after a nervous two hour wait, she did just that.

In June three healthy chicks were ringed and soon after that they successfully fledged and dispersed; we will be watching the skies with fingers crossed.



RSPB Geltsdale Gallery has hosted some amazing artists during 2025 including beautiful sculptures, art and wildlife photography including exhibitions from Always Rustic to mixed media art from students of Cumberland Adult Learning. We have lots booked in for 2026 too, including local artist Kathy Arthur.

The Geltsdale Gallery is situated in our visitor centre at Stagsike Cottages and is open 9 am- 5 pm daily. It's a lovely spot to have a cuppa and learn about the reserve and local history.

Our visitor centre is approximately half-way on the Stagsike Trail but worth the walk. Please park considerately at the RSPB car park or walk in from the village if full. Dippers can be seen regularly along Howgill Beck (see <https://www.therrc.co.uk/blog/howgill-beck-site-visit-24th-october> for a blog from the River Restoration Centre) and now is a great time to see Black Grouse along the Stagsike and Woodland trails as well as Fieldfares and Redwings.

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