



What is valued and concerns and ideas: September 2026

Over 2026 a variety of community engagement activities are taking place to understand views on Cockermouth from those that live in the town, live close to town or visit. The aim is to create a plan which sets out a shared vision for the future of Cockermouth, with a clear set of practical actions to make that a reality.

This summary gives an outline of the ideas that are emerging so far.

To help us move to the next phase. Please let us know if...

- you feel any important issues about the future of Cockermouth have been missed
- you have your own Ideas for things that could be done and opportunities for working together to meet any of the concerns that have already been raised
- you are involved in a group that is already doing something to meet any of the concerns, or has ideas or plans for some action?

Just fill in our form [here](#) or email us on: cclp@cockermouth.org

What has been shared so far:

THEME 1: GREEN SPACES, PARKS, NATURE & COMMUNITY GROWING

What is valued – Red squirrels, trees and our parks and Greenway

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"sprinkle plant life around town"	Plant street trees, urban greenery. Protect Harris Park, Memorial Gardens. Sustain and expand seasonal floral infrastructure; prioritize maintenance of highly valued floral baskets.
"steps down to the riverside need attention" "develop waterside walking trails"	Create and promote designated trails along the riverbanks to encourage outdoor activity.
"Less green areas" / "More green spaces"	Concern about loss of greenbelt; desire for expanded green areas.
"save the red squirrels" "Let the grass grow to meadows – stop using weed killer"	Protect nature. Biodiversity-friendly maintenance. Conservation projects for native wildlife – red squirrel zones, bug hotels, bird baths.
"plant orchards on unused verges" "communal compost thing" / "tool library"	Community orchards, allotments, neighbourhood growing. Communal composting; shared tools; sustainability networks.

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"dog fouling on paths"	More bins, dog-poo bag dispensers and bin emptying
"rubbish-picking week"	Community litter pick week.

THEME 2. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, COMMUNITY SPACES, EVENTS AND COMMUNITY BELONGING

What is valued: community events like the Taste Festival, lights switch-on and Cockermouth Live.

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"a website dedicated to Cockermouth events"	Better communication hubs; single events website.
"Anti-social teen behaviour" "Nothing for teenagers" "Lack of community for young people" "youth centre maybe??" "gaming hub with bowling" "pump track or dirt jumps" "want to hang out without getting judged"	Linked to lack of youth provision. Dedicated youth spaces to reduce anti-social behaviour. Indoor youth club/gaming hub. Pump track or skate park. Severe lack of activities and safe spaces. Combat systemic youth isolation through structural, affordable engagement frameworks.
"Lack of funding going into sporting and welfare" "Improving sports offer to give local talent better development routes" "4g Astro and floodlights" / "artificial 4G sports facility"	Formally leverage the strong existing reputations of successful local clubs to secure external grants. Address funding deficiencies in athletic assets and community well-being support. Install an all-weather 4G pitch with floodlighting to protect football, rugby, and hockey schedules from winter weather cancellations and promote community health. Provide concrete, localised athletic performance and training pipelines to retain high-potential local youth athletes.
"More Community groups for under 40s" "cycling, rugby teams, comedy events, use of local celebs"	Target a demographic gap by forming social networks geared specifically toward young adults and professionals. Diversify events to include sports competitions, comedy acts, and local public figures to generate positive PR.
"cooking workshops"	All-age activities.
"support groups for women"	Women's networks.
"tackling outsider exclusion" "Immigration"	Welcoming new residents; reducing isolation.

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"Social isolation"	Need more inclusive community spaces.
"Pavement cafes and summer pop-ups" "Pedestrianise market place on summer weekends"	Expand festivals into evening economy; extend shop/café hours.
"The catering standard is consistent/good" "Cockermouth to have a Bierkeller (with games)" "beer festival... more of that kind of thing" "Expand food festivals to shut all of market place... each Sunday April to October"	Capitalise on the reliable, high quality of local food and drink offerings to boost tourism. Specifically, expand the portfolio of local food and drink events. Create seasonal, recurring Sunday closures on Market Place to foster permanent outdoor drinking and dining spaces.
"Improving nightlife, bars and restaurants on offer"	Focus urban development on modernising evening economy options to retain younger demographics. Establish a social indoor space featuring games (pool, darts) to capture tourism and evening entertainment.
"More community-wide events"	Build on strong event culture. Formally recognise and anchor key community festivals to enhance town-wide inclusivity. Partner with historic estate (e.g. castle) owners to utilise private heritage assets for public festivals or gatherings.
"Have the cinema run more modern films more frequently" "weekly outdoor cinema in summer in memorial gardens"	Launch a seasonal, open-air community cinema project. Improve the local cinema programme with consistent, mainstream scheduling.

THEME 3: TOWN BUILT ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING, HERITAGE & LOCAL ECONOMY

What is valued – the thriving town centre, heritage and culture

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"Locals priced out" "cheaper starter housing" "ban on second home ownership" "house prices come down so we can live here"	Executive homes and second homes push out young families. Caps/bans on AirBnBs and holiday homes.

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
	Affordable housing, low-cost rentals, starter flats. Targeted housing market adjustments so local-born residents can remain in town.
"no more large housing developments" "Wildlife places being used for houses"	Opposition to big greenfield estates. Concern about greenbelt loss.
"all new builds carbon neutral"	NetZero housing.
"protect our independent shops" "spaces for local business" "Town losing its identity" "stop the invasion of vape shops" "Supermarkets and chain stores offer affordable option" "Plenty of charity shops"	Importance of maintaining a balance of shops. Protect independent shops; enforce heritage shopfront rules. Support local trade. Fear of homogenisation. Maintain high-quality retail identity. Acknowledge and balance the high volume of charity shops as a valued element of affordable local retail.
"make use of old HSBC bank ... cinema" "High rent/rates?" "Empty shops"	Reuse empty buildings for business hubs/community spaces. Address increasing business vacancies on the high street. Costs deter new businesses.
"Cockermouth Castle" "Maintain Wordsworth House"	Incorporate the landmark castle into local identity and exploration initiatives. Ensure active structural and programmatic preservation of core historic national assets.
"Shop fronts run down" "boring," "dull," and "grey" "signage in-keeping with the old/traditional vibe"	Improve visual upkeep of retail areas. A modern revamp, including vibrant paint, excitingly styled buildings, public art, and large professional murals. Enforce stricter aesthetic design codes for commercial shopfront and takeaway signage.
"dogs should be allowed in all shops"	Leverage the town's dog-friendly reputation by implementing a universal business adoption policy for pets.
"Close to the Lakes... Buttermere, Loweswater, Crummock" "Opportunity to develop the Lake District tourism offer... while preserving world class scenery"	Strategic Tourism Integration: Actively market and tie the town economy to the Western Lakes to boost footfall. Ensure sustainable tourism growth that respects local heritage and rural borders.
"Town centre messy – weeds, litter" "Slippy pavements in winter"	Need regular cleaning and maintenance. Gritting and winter maintenance.
"staging point for a world class history and heritage museum for the lakes"	Develop a premier heritage hub to anchor Cockermouth as the historic focal point for Lake District tourism.
"We need an attraction at the roundabout"	Install a focal landmark, public art installation, or floral statement at the main entryway roundabout.

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"Close to pioneering energy and industrial evolution on the coasts"	Capitalise on regional green energy and coastal industrial corridors to attract employment and investments.

THEME 4: GETTING AROUND - TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC & ACTIVE TRAVEL

What is valued: the walkable nature of town

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"town can be gridlocked" "Infrastructure to deal with so many cars and people"	Outer link road/bypass; 20mph zones; safer crossings. Address systemic central town road improvements to handle high vehicle and footfall volume
"safer way to cycle" "Safer cycle access from the west"	Secure bike racks; expanded cycle lanes. Improve routes from Brigham, Greysouthern, Eaglesfield.
"area around Sainsbury's is terrible" "Wide pavements"	Repair uneven pavements; improve roundabout entries. Explicitly maintain and protect wide pedestrian paths to accommodate foot traffic comfortably.
"path from the bridge on the Greenway is mud"	Re-paving, widening, lighting the Greenway.
"Parking! Prohibits visitors" "Better enforcement" "Improve elements such as parking in peak seasons" "More free parking" / "Cost of parking""Cheap parking" "Motorbikes taking up full spaces"	Parking shortages; charges deter shoppers. Cars on double yellows; unclear markings. Develop a targeted peak-season tourism parking strategy to protect spaces for locals. Provide free parking blocks or windows to offset visitor friction. Introduce low-cost or subsidised parking tiers to actively support local shoppers and high street footfall. Dedicated motorbike parking.
"bus service to villages so non-drivers don't feel isolated" "buses ... you cannot guarantee they will turn up" "Old buses" "Have a late bus from Whitehaven/Workington/Carlisle"	Better bus routes to Lorton, Dean, Brigham. Protect C123 hopper. Resolve unreliable timetables and cancellations. Need modern, reliable vehicles. Look at accessibility for all. Introduce late-night regional bus links to better support local commuters, hospitality workers, and nightlife. Formally lobby local transport providers to restore basic operational reliability to highly valued existing bus routes.

THEME 5: LOCAL SERVICES (Healthcare, Dentistry, Libraries, Toilets)

What is valued: local services and facilities

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"Access to doctors needs improving and NHS dentist" "Offer later GP appointments"	GP shortages; no NHS dentists. Introduce evening or after-hours medical services for residents who commute outside the town for work and cannot attend daytime slots.
"Library opening times"	Longer opening hours needed.
"Public toilets"	More accessible, clean facilities.

THEME 6: FLOODING & CLIMATE RESILIENCE

What is valued: upstream flood work

People said things like...	Concerns and ideas
"collapsed courthouse could be cleaned up from the river"	Fix/demolish Old Court House; clear riverbed rubble.
"Flood mitigation work outside Cockermouth is protecting us" "Flooding and missed opportunities"	Ensure climate infrastructure or flood plain adjustments don't unintentionally strip away local leisure or aesthetic potential.
Sustainable drainage, rain gardens	Climate-resilient design.