

CUMBRIA COUNTY HISTORY TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

The year has been one of steady progress and consolidation: several further township/parish articles have been completed and posted on the Trust website, and another 30 are under research. Further improvements have been made to the website, and volunteer training has continued satisfactorily.

We are now entering on the fifth year of the life of this Trust, and of the VCH Cumbria project, and the trustees have given careful thought to the measures necessary to ensure long-term continuation of the project. We have, during the first five years, been receiving the very generous grant of £10,000 pa from the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society - and whilst we hope still to retain the generous support of the CWAAS we cannot expect continued financial support at that exceptionally high level. The Society are currently reviewing their position and will make a decision in June 2014.

In parallel with funding issues we have also been considering the need for assured long-term support from Lancaster University, centre of excellence for the project. The Trust and the University have agreed that the Cumbria VCH project should become embedded in the University's newly created Regional Heritage Centre, of which Professor Angus Winchester will be the first director. The University have agreed that when he retires he will be suitably replaced, and Dr Sarah Rose - now Assistant Editor of VCH Cumbria - will be employed within the RHC. This very important change is fully explained in my letter to all our members and volunteers (previously circulated and also attached herewith). The AGM will offer an excellent opportunity for further discussion of these important changes.

The trustees recommend these changes to the membership as providing confidence in the long-term future of the project, and ask all our members to continue their generous support.

Bryan Gray

Chair, Cumbria County History Trust

March 2014