



Annual General Meeting
7 October 2022
Quaker Meeting House and on Zoom

Chair's Report

Looking back over the year, the headlines for PACT are: “The patient is now off life-support and showing signs of adjusting positively to a rapidly-changing but vulnerable World; please send reinforcements”.

PACT has managed to survive the Covid disruptions and other major upheavals affecting the planet at large and our small corner and has begun escape the shadowy two-dimensional Zoomland to re-engage with the real world. Public interest in and political awareness of PACT's long-standing key issues – climate change, environmental destruction, fossil fuels, energy, food, waste, transport – have increased markedly.

PACT is one of the eleven front-line “Delivery Partners” of the National lottery-funded Zero Carbon Cumbria (ZCC) project, now late in its second year of its 2021-25 implementation period. ZCC has a managerial and technical cadre of part-time professionals to run the whole initiative, most of whom are located in Cumbria Action for Sustainability based in Penrith.

The substantial grant funding has enabled PACT to hire a paid part-time Community Action Officer (CAO) to support the all-volunteer group “behind the scenes” with administrative, planning, organisational and communications functions. The novel arrangement started very well in the summer 2021 but our first CAO decided to resign for Covid-related health reasons early this year and was not replaced until July. Notwithstanding the “Curse of Covid”, we are confident that the resource will allow PACT to ramp up project activities to fulfil our commitments to the ZCC goals.

This AGM is asked to place on record PACT's thanks to the ZCC structure and the National Lottery for the shared opportunity to make a real difference in combatting the climate and environmental emergencies in our area and beyond.

The substantial actions taken and supported by groups of PACT members and fellow activists over the year are recounted in the Secretary's Report to follow. In addition, individual Directors have represented PACT in ZCC meetings and training sessions, monthly Cumbria Sustainability Network sessions, the Eden Community Fund Panel and an *ad hoc* discussion with neighbouring SLACC – South Lakes Action for Climate Change.

Big thanks to those Directors and members who have contributed during the past year despite the difficulties, especially the “Usual Suspects”, much appreciated.

PACT has punched well above its weight on a number of occasions in the past and it continues to be the sole apolitical organisation with an environmental voice looking at the interests of Penrith and Eden. Nevertheless, the gap between where we are and where we need to be in terms of the natural environment, carbon reductions and climate change is greater than ever to enable people to engage with development projects that will make a real impact.

However, the main constraint on PACT activities over the years, in its various incarnations, has not been funding but rather the availability of active volunteers. This has been the shared experience of other sustainability groups, such as SLACC and Sustainable Carlisle, and even the

much-quoted Totnes Transition Town. We need all the armchair support we can get from the community but future progress depends on devising sound projects and recruiting individuals prepared to put in some time and effort to carry them through. There is a time and place to debate the theoretical and scientific aspects of addressing the climate and environmental emergencies, but the “A” in PACT is Action; nothing happens until a tree is planted, something is kept out of landfill, community wellbeing is enhanced or something changes for the better.

Looking to the coming year, the primary intention is to overhaul the membership setup (with an annual subscription) to accommodate both activists and supporters and to set about recruitment by inviting interested individuals to take part in an event alongside promotional appeals. The familiar monthly all-purpose gatherings should give way to periodic business meetings for the Directors/CAO and a range of once-off or serial events for the membership and public. It is important for PACT to position itself to have a voice with the new Westmorland & Furness political administration (despite being dragged kicking and screaming from Cumberland) as well as continuing to engage with the Town Council.

The need for ACTION is greater now than ever before and we are determined to take PACT up to a new level in the coming year.

Geoff Rockliffe-King & John Bodger on behalf of the Directors

Secretary's Report

PACT's aims are to **tackle peak oil, climate change, economic sustainability and loss of biodiversity in Penrith and Eden District**. This is a very broad remit which covers all sorts of aspects. As usual PACT members have been involved in a number of different activities. These are not necessarily organised by the PACT board but we link in where we can with other groups and organisations. We also help other groups as an umbrella if they need support.

Two groups which have continued to flourish during the year the Community Gardeners and the Repair cafés. We will hear more about them later on.

Last year, thanks to the Zero Carbon Cumbria project, we appointed Rosie Bradshaw to work for us on a self-employed basis as our Community Action Officer. You may have met her here at the last AGM or at one of our stalls in the market or Repair cafes. Very sadly, Rosie struggled to get her energy back after a bout of Covid and decided she had to cut down on her commitments so left her role with us. In the early part of 2022, to fill the gap until we appointed a new Community Action Officer, we had some valuable assistance from Georgina Stephenson. One of Georgina's tasks was to promote the Repair Café, in the Herald and via social media, and improving the paperwork. Her advertising was particularly successful when Seedy Saturday was combined with the Repair Café and the Old Fire Station was really buzzing.

Since then we have appointed a new Community Action Officer, Kate Clement, who has been working for us since July. She will introduce herself to you later and tell you more about her role.

One relatively new activity for PACT is tree-planting. During the last few years a sub-group of PACT has been trying to find suitable places to plant trees in and around Penrith. It proved surprisingly difficult to find suitable spots and get the agreement of owners, neighbours etc. The only location which has come to fruition so far is the Frenchfield playing fields where PACT members and many others planted several areas with assorted native trees, provided by the Woodland Trust, last December. Most of the trees there are doing well. Carleton Park in Penrith is another area that we looked at in conjunction with Eden District Council and we will be

helping with planting there this autumn. PACT members were also invited to assist with a number of other tree-planting projects during the year and there are more planned for this winter.

Back in October last year a group of cyclists came through Penrith on their way to COP-26 in Glasgow. We arranged to meet and greet them here at the Meeting House, providing drinks and snacks. An evening meeting at Christ Church was arranged in conjunction with Churches Together in Penrith, where members of the public would be able to meet the riders and find out more about their journey and their hopes for the conference. Unfortunately the terrible weather meant that the cyclists were late arriving in Penrith and exhausted so the evening meeting had to be cancelled. But those of us who met them enjoyed talking to them and were humbled by their dedication.

More recently there has been Big Green Week. Most of the PACT directors were on holiday in September so we were delighted that Kate was able to organise a number of events, some in conjunction with Penrith Library.

So what is coming up next for PACT?

We are currently setting up a series of talks, with speakers including Paul Allen from the Centre for Alternative Technology, and our own Richard Waller. We hope to help with a project called Solar Made Easy, in conjunction with CAFS (Cumbria Action for Sustainability) which will help people navigate some of the barriers to installing their own solar panels. There will be more tree-planting this winter. And a new website is being planned. Other PACT projects are up to you! There are plenty of things that we could be doing but we need you to help! So please get involved and let's get more done!

Christine Sutherland
Secretary

Treasurers Report for PACT Ltd 2022 AGM

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022 were prepared by our independent examiner Jo Heeley – thanks to her. Once approved, we will submit the accounts to HMRC. We are not required to pay any corporation tax this year.

At the start of the accounting year we held a total of £6,464.93 in current and deposit accounts at Unity Bank and Affinity Credit Union.

Throughout the year we received £7.55 in membership fees and £128.87 in donations.

Zero Carbon Cumbria grants totalling £12,210.50 were received during the year.

At the end of the accounting year the PACT accounts held a total of £11,746.20.

Our core expenditure (membership of the Financial Conduct Authority £67, insurance £99, website hosting £120 and bank fees £72) is approximately £350 a year, so we have ample funds to remain viable for the foreseeable future.

I commend these accounts for approval.

Philip Sturgess
PACT Treasurer