

# Dalston in Bloom 2019



Dalston is a large village and civil parish within the City of Carlisle district of Cumbria. It is situated on the B5299 road about four miles (6 km) south-south-west of Carlisle city centre, and approximately five miles (8 km) from Junction 42 of the M6 motorway. The village has a population of approx. 1,500 (2011 census), and serves as a key service centre for a much wider rural area. At the centre is The Square, which is square in name only. It is dominated by St Michael's and All Angels Church. Most of the shops are located in and around The Square. To the northwest of the centre of the village is the Barras Lane Business Industrial Estate which is home to numerous businesses. There is also a Nestlé factory producing powdered milk and a fuel depot.



Dalston is very fortunate in having a thriving community. It has numerous clubs and societies that cater for all age groups and interests.

The community really does get involved in events. In May the local Gardening Club held its plant sale which was very well attended where, visitors and locals obtained a lot of plants for their gardens. The festival



committee organise events throughout the year for everyone to enjoy. Please see Appendix 1 for the 2019 Festival Week in August. Last year the festival was one of its most successful yet with the village seeing countless locals and visitors every day. As last year

there will be a flower festival again in the church. Many individuals and groups take part in this wonderful display attracting many people.

Dalston is situated near one end of the 80 mile Cumbrian Way. Walkers can enjoy refreshments from our cafes, pubs and shops and sit in The Square or on the Kingsway in dry weather. It is also a very popular dog walking area.

The Parish Council own the cemetery and have a Cemetery Working Group looking after the maintenance. There is a Churchyard Management Programme to follow. See Appendix 2. The Hearse House has been repaired





after the completion of a bat survey. An owl box has been installed in the roof of the hearse house and the cemetery now has a resident owl. At a recent walk in the cemetery we were thrilled to see it fly from its nest. Suzanne Collinson is passionate about slow worms and did her university dissertation on the colony in the Dalston Churchyard. The cemetery was digitalised by Atlantic Geomatics in 2015 and is being updated.

The Parish Council Office, which used to be the old work house, along with the wildflower meadow and the parish gardens are at Forge Green. See Appendix 3. The gardens were first allocated in 2012 from a grassed area. The plots are cultivated by four parishioners. We are very proud of our community gardens in the village. The occupants all work extremely hard and make the most of their gardens with an amazing amount of varied crop to harvest. We are very fortunate that a parishioner has sited a bee hive in this area too. Another parishioner has a small community garden on common land near the mill stream where he produces a remarkable amount of produce in such a small area. He has recently added a water butt. This was formerly the pinfold/sheepwash.

In 2017, Rae Beckwith, RHS Britain in Bloom Lead Judge, gave Dalston some black and red lupin breeding stock to match the colours of our village cockerel emblem. These were nurtured in Dalston and formed part of the Britain in Bloom Gold winning displays in 2018. Since then he has kindly bred some more plants, in his words 'an even better colour match', to add to these. The Jubilee Garden volunteers have prepared a new bed to plant up, in the middle of the village with the special Dalston Black Red lupins. Hopefully this 'Dalston Heritage' display will be in full flower for Cumbria in Bloom judging in early July. The Jubilee Garden is ably looked after by a group of volunteers from the Dalston Gardening Club. One of the Parish Council capital projects is to supply another seat in the gardens facing The Green.



A small group of people plant and look after the Dalston station area to make it look nice and colourful for the train users. The Dalston station had trees removed by Network Rail. Unfortunately the Station Gardening Group was not informed and the area of well-established flowers was decimated. As the work was progressing they asked for a tree to be left as a six foot stump. A local man then came to chain saw an owl onto the stump. The gardeners worked hard to replant the whole area. We also have a small group of volunteers who look after the area outside the Dalston Medical Centre making it very attractive to the GP patients. They have transformed the grounds and it is often remarked upon. The public toilets are maintained by Carlisle City Council and are an important asset for walkers and cyclists visiting Dalston. Recently the opening and closing of





the toilets has been taken on by local businesses and volunteers. Again parishioners volunteer to plant flowers and tend around this area keeping it weed free.

Keeping Dalston tidy and free of litter and dog dirt is important to us.

Fortunately we do have litter pickers in Dalston who are diligent in their regular collections. Dalston is attractive to dog walkers, so ensuring that they pick-up the mess left by their dogs is a high priority. Dalston has plenty of bins around all the open spaces, and these are well used by residents and visitors alike. The Glave Hill car park accommodates the very well-used recycling centre. There are numerous individuals and many organisations that all play their part to help keep Dalston a clean and attractive place for all. One lady who picks-up litter collected 1084 bags in 2018 and 20,701 in 22 years. There are also villagers who regularly water flowers and weed around the community as well as generally making the village tidy and caring for the local environment. A parishioner plants window boxes at Church House and a couple have taken on a few flower borders in the churchyard and regularly tend them and keeping them looking immaculate. We have very active Scouts Beavers and Cubs in Dalston who make bird boxes around the village.



Cumbria County Council attends to all the maintenance of the highways. The Parish Council supplies plants throughout the village bought from Capsticks a local nursery, which are watering and caring for many of them. Dalston Parish Council contracts out to Wigton Town Council the grass cutting for the cemetery, churchyard, recreation field, areas in the central village and surrounding hamlets. Riverside, the housing association look after the grassy areas on Madam Bank and the Bowling Club look after the Bowling Club beside the Recreation Centre. The Recreation Association is responsible for the playground area and building environs while the Redspearlands Footpath Group volunteers look after many of the footpaths in the Parish.

St Michael's School have put in new play equipment for primary school aged children. This has been in regular use since its installation. The children spend very exciting lunch times trying out various items including a wobbly bridge, climbing wall and scramble net. We are extremely grateful to the many local businesses who donated so generously and made this project a possibility and to the National Lottery for their grant. We hope that the playground becomes a loved and much used facility for primary school aged children and look forward to years of fun. Year 3 and 4 children from St Michael's School walked to a local



wildflower garden where they did a project. The weather was favourable and they all enjoyed a lovely day out. The completed project was on show for the village to see.

Storm Ali in September 2018 brought problems to Dalston. The damage was widespread, and spoiled the iconic chestnut tree in the centre of the village.



Its foliage had not been so prolific in the last two years and unfortunately after inspection had to be felled due to disease. The next day was spent clearing roads and paths. The heavy rain caused floods on the Green. There was a flood meeting with the authorities, councillors and land owners. The current drainage system is unable to cope when there is heavy rainfall. Cumbria County Council agreed to carry out a full drainage assessment on the area.



One of our flagship projects this year is the community renovation of the worn area in front of the well used Dalston Co-op, to match the garden

area we completed last year. While the work was carried out by Westwood Landscapes, it was funded by community donations. A

trodden area of grass was also returned. A group of children have helped us with the collection of stones which have been used in the project. These river stones have been used in gardens and properties over the years and a wall, recognised as part of Dalston heritage has been rebuilt by Story Homes adjacent to the Townhead Road entrance to the new housing estate.



After many years of parishioners requests this year the Highways department laid down a large area of The Green with grasscrete which enables visitors to the Victory Hall and the Methodist Church much easier parking.



Appendix 4 is a map of Dalston to show the route of the tour on 10<sup>th</sup> July.

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Dalston Festival Week Programme 2019

Appendix 2 - Churchyard Management Programme

Appendix 3 - Kelsey's Wildflower Meadow

Appendix 4 - Route Map of Dalston

