Well, that’s another 12 months since last year’s AGM and it’s been a strenuous and sometimes challenging time for the Parish, parishioners and the councillors.

We’re now under new management regarding the County Councils; the original Cumbria is now split in two with Cumberland Council & Westmorland & Furness council.

Covid is still out there but has taken a back seat with the media; however, we still need to be vigilant and be aware of the symptoms.

**High Close Proposed Quarry**: has dominated the last year with ongoing extensions for the revised Environment Statement. During the past 6 years the threat of Thomas Armstrongs reopening the quarry at High Close has continued to be hanging over us and recently we’ve all received a resubmission document regarding the planning application a new application for the vehicular access.

The active Working Group are continuing to fight this resurrection on a number of fronts and with everything we can gather from our resources of committed and experienced personnel in the Group plus our Solicitor.

Update: this afternoon I had a virtual meeting with our solicitor after an extremely important discovery by Brian Stephenson doing some research into dormant quarries and being listed in 1996. \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Working Group are meeting tomorrow evening to discuss the way forward / future handling of the two planning applications and to ultimately stop them.

Please remember that the **Just Giving** donation link is still open to enable you to support paying for our solicitor who is doing a cracking job. If you wish to make a donation to this extremely worthy cause, then please review our Just Giving pages with this link: -

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/noplumblandquarry>

Still awaiting the ‘site visit’ by County Councilors prior to Development Control meeting in Kendal; date of meeting has still not been announced but they will be reminded to undertake the visit.

Prior to the latest submissions for the quarry & access arriving through our letterboxes; it was agreed that as the planning application had been outstanding for six years that the council should formally ask Thomas Armstrong to withdraw its application to re-open High Close Quarry and to object to any further extension when the current extension expires on 31st March 2023. Letter sent on the 24th March 2023 to Rachel Brophy and the Development panel.

In addition, our solicitor has sent a letter to the Secretary of State ‘calling in’ the application; and I backed this up with a separate letter to the same dept on the 19th April 2023.

And there is still a possibility of Northern Gas having to move the high-pressure pipe that runs across the site or if it’s not moved, then they’ll need pay the applicant compensation for the minerals which cannot be extracted adjacent and below the gas pipeline.

In addition, yesterday I resurrected the removal of the ‘landfill’ prior to any possible quarrying operations – this time, as Allerdale BC no longer exist, I’ve sent my email to Environmental Health at Cumberland council, and I’ve received an acknowledgement that they have received it.

Several members of the Working Group (with the groups support) have been extremely proactive with continuously challenging CCC Developments dept, escalating complaints due to their mishandling of information and communicating with the office of the Secretary of State (Michael Gove).

Plumbland Parish Council have applied for and received approval for an initial extension of one month from the due date of the 26th May 2023 to provide objections / recommendations /conditions etc. Date now extends to 23rd June 2023. And please remember that all parishioners are encouraged to send objections to Cumberland Council, MPs and Minerals and Waste Planning team. Full details of who to contact with email addresses etc will be advertised during the Public Meeting in the Village Hall this coming Saturday 13th May 2023 between 10:00hrs and 12:00hrs. Meeting will provide historical and current update regarding the on the ongoing mechanisms of the Working Group and what we do next including submitting numerous conditions etc.

Incidentally, I’ve requested out local MP Mark Jenkinson, the Baroness of Ullock (Sue Hayman ex. Labour MP for Workington) and Jill Perry (Green Partly and Cumberland Councillor) to join us at this Saturdays 13th May 2023 ‘Public Meeting’ here in the village hall.

**Clints Quarry:** latest from Ros Berry (Chairperson Blindcrake Parish Council) and I quoted from her correspondence: **“**We have just been formally notified by the LDNPA that they have refused the application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for the 1974 permission at Clints Quarry”. No change to last year.

**Moota Quarry**: we’ve been advised that Moota quarry will shortly be applying for another 10 year extension to their planning application. Previous extension was approved in 2014.

**B5301 – Traffic Regulation Order** – proposed 7.5T weight restriction (except for access); outcome from the joint Highways / Local Councils meeting in November 2021 was for

a full independent road safety survey be undertaken when funds allow. Survey was undertaken a last year by Capita and CCC Highways eventually received a full report which included the plans for future workscopes when funds allowed. To date the following has been undertaken: -

* Parsonby brow overgrown trees, branches and bushes trimmed back to improve the view around corners and the steep hill.
* Rumble strips re-highlighted in the wrong colour ie. beige / cement colour; not the original red! It was also noted that there were two extra new strips.
* New arrow / chevron sign installed at bull park corner.
* Road signs washed / cleaned.
* Cut back any overgrowth that was obscuring sign faces.
* Jet patching works have been done to potholes that met intervention levels and that were suitable for such treatment.

On the 13th April 2023 I received the following reply from Amber Sykes Highways Network Manager to a report with photos I sent in regarding the severely damaged and deteriorating road surface (approx. 60 metres in length across the full width of the road) adjacent Arkleby Hall.

Dear Mr Rutherford, thank you for the email, my apologies for missing the earlier email. I’ve checked the system and against the reference number you’ve quoted, and it appears that the area has already been noted by one of our condition inspectors as requiring repair.

I’ve spoken with the team at Lillyhall and have been advised that cores are due to be taken to determine the depth and construction type best suited to do a full width permanent repair here.  These works will be done with the next 3 months.

However, having looked at the photos you’ve included, I’ve asked for some temporary repairs to be done to fill the worst areas as soon as a team and suitable traffic management can be arranged. Please note these temporary repairs will just be an interim measure to fill in the worst section until the permanent full length /width / depth reconstruction works are done in the next 3 month.

Yours sincerely

Amber Sykes

In addition, after numerous requests for the installation of 2 grit bins; they were finally installed on Parsonby Brow late last year.

**Liftshare**: never really got off the ground despite being advertised in the parish newsletter and noticeboards.

**Defibrillator**: late last year when the sundries were replaced, it was noted that the cabinet was not working. A new cabinet has been purchased and replaced and the defibrillator is now registered with NW Ambulance Service.

**Parish Newsletter**: due to Rebecca Watson stepping down from publishing the newsletter and Holly Stephenson picked up the gauntlet. The newsletter will now be issued on a quarterly basis. It was agreed to donate £50.00 per edition towards the running/delivery costs. It should be noted that Rebecca is still the editor.

**Speed Indicating Devices (three**): still in operation and hopefully reducing potential speeders. New battery supplied FOC by Pandora signs for the SID located in Plumbland.

**Speed Camera** visits Parsonby once a month on the B5301 and I’m advised he’s still catching the speeding motorists.

**Community Speed Watch:** the speed indicating devices & police camera van is currently being backed-up with an active community speed watch group. To date, we are now self-sufficient after purchasing our own refurbished Laser Pro III with a grant from Tallentire Windfarm Fund and it’s in use on the B5301 with the small team of volunteers.

**Light No.12** in Parsonby: LED ‘Hybrid’ type (Wind turbine plus Solar panel) is still operational in Parsonby.

**Road Sweeping** vehicle is not on a routine visit timetable; we need to request its attendance via email to Cumberland Council or go online to their new website.

**Grass Cutting:** this year we have retained our grass cutting contractors (Mike Dowling Ltd); however, his team haven’t got off to a good start to the season ie. cutting the wildflowers which shouldn’t have been cut until next month and missing large grassed areas. This morning I phoned Mike and have left a voice message on his answering machine asking him to contact me asap.

**Litter picking / Parish Spring Clean:** last year’s village clean-up day took place a week before the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations. This was extremely successful day, and I expressed my thanks to all that took part including the children; also thanked Aspatria Co-op for providing tins of soup as refreshments & bread rolls.

**Bus shelter**: in the square has gone from strength to strength and is popular for plants swops, book exchange, donations of kindling, potatoes etc. and the dazzling eye-catching gallery of pictures / drawings from the children at Plumbland C of E Primary School.

**Geological Disposal Facility in Allerdale**: this subject is now closed and we’re no longer of any interest.

**Highways: A595** – Bothel junction upgrade to a staggered junction seems to be going on forever but it currently looks like the end is nigh!

**Blocked drains and gullies**: are constantly being reported on-line to Cumberland Council.

**Queens Platinum Jubilee:** in June last year we celebrated the Queens Platinum Jubilee and I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Plumbland Community Group and Plumbland Village Hall Committee for organising what was a spectacularly long weekend of celebrations. Parish Council supported this celebration by donating £150.

**Coronation celebrations:** I’m advised that last weekend’s celebrations went down extremely well especially viewing the ceremony on the big screen and the sports the day after. Parish council are financially supporting the King Charles III coronation by purchasing and distributing commemorative coins to the parish children.

**The Future:** so, what does the future hold us: good question. Naturally the Working Group will be persevering with pulling out all the stops to prevent the quarry from reopening at High Close.

Additionally, I’d like to thank all the Parish Councillors for their ongoing contribution and assistance throughout the last 365 days.

Finally, our Clerk (Trevor Gear) has been a tremendous pilar of support & a perceptive advisor to me and the Parish Council throughout the past year; thank you Trevor and I sincerely hope you’ll be with us for many years to come.

Thank you.

Tony Rutherford

Chairperson

Plumbland Parish Council.