

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON WEDNESDAY 5 MAY 2021

Present: Councillor J Laidlow Town Mayor/Chair
Councillor G Bennion
Councillor S Barnes
Councillor I Burns
Councillor A Kennon
Councillor D Malloy
Councillor S Nicholson
Councillor A Semple
Councillor A Smith
Councillor C Smith
Councillor A Tyson
Councillor R Watson

Also Present: A press representative, one elector and one member of the public were present.

Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11 March 2019 were signed as a correct record.

Annual Report of the Town Council

As 2020/21 draws to a close we will all look back over the year with different experiences, memories and emotions. I am sure though we would all agree it has been a challenging and unusual year to say the least.

Town Council meetings can now be recorded and filmed and as a result the Town Council has adopted a Protocol which is displayed at the entrance to our meeting room.

The Town Council is consulted by the Borough Council on all planning applications within the town of Cockermouth and in all cases, comments have been forwarded to the Borough Council setting out the Town Council's views. The final decision on planning applications does not always agree with the views of the Town Council however the majority of decisions do agree.

Special Planning meetings are now held on the first Thursday of every month if required.

Councillor Malloy represented the Town Council at the inquiry held on 8 December 2020 into the stopping up of public footpath 223003, land off Strawberry How Road, Cockermouth. Whilst the Inspector found merit in the arguments submitted, the Order was confirmed.

I am pleased to inform you that every square inch of available space in the Town Hall is now leased. The Citizens Advice Bureau continue to hold their outreach sessions each Wednesday in a ground floor office. Allerdale Borough Council enforces usage of our car park on our behalf.

Victoria Hall is currently leased by Mrs Bealt. The Vicky Business Centre opened on 21 February 2018 providing vibrant, flexible and affordable office space for home workers, start-up businesses etc. Flood resilience works were completed and paid for with a flood resilience grant and should help protect the premises from future flooding.

The Tourist Information Centre moved to the library on Main Street on 3 April 2017, along with Allerdale Local Links. The building transferred to Cockermouth Town Council in October 2018. We work in partnership with Cumbria County Council to deliver a library service.

Our website contains lots of useful information including councillor details, dates of town council meetings, minutes of meetings, events etc. Check out www.ckermouth.org. Agendas were published as of May 2019. We have also added a 'green section' to our website.

We launched our cockermouth town council face book page in July 2020, it has been instrumental in sending out information to a wider audience.

Our twinning links continue to flourish despite tough economic times and a global pandemic

Sadly our 37th Anniversary Visit to Cockermouth was cancelled.

Hopefully our 38th Anniversary Visit to Cockermouth will take place in October 2021.

In June 2017 we became a 'sister city to Hebron, New Hampshire. Originally Hebron was part of a larger colonial town named after Lord Cockermouth. Cockermouth was founded in 1766. By 1792, it had grown into two geographically distinct villages. As a result, Cockermouth was split. The western portion became Groton and the eastern portion became Hebron. A representative from Hebron visited Cockermouth in September 2019.

As a result of the town being awarded the Europe Prize in the year 2000 a Europe Prize Scholarship Fund was set up and has now become established and a great help to Cockermouth 6th form youngsters pursuing their studies in Europe. The Committee continues to raise money to keep the fund going for the foreseeable future. I have chosen the Europe Prize Scholarship

Fund as my charity for 2019/20 & 2020/21.

The Council provides allotments on two sites St. Helen's Street and the Gote. The Gote Road allotments were transferred to the Town Council from Cumbria County Council under a community asset transfer. There are currently approximately 52 people on the waiting list for an allotment. The Town Clerk continues to meet members of the Allotments Association on a regular basis and provide information for their annual report.

Unfortunately, many 2020/21 events we sponsor including Cockermouth Carnival, Cockermouth Live, Taste Cumbria & Taste Christmas and Christmas Panto were cancelled due to the pandemic.

The fireworks display held in the Memorial Gardens was also a casualty of the pandemic.

Switch on Day was also cancelled. We did carry on with the Window Spotting Competition and Grand Window. The Christmas Lights were fantastic again this year. We continue to be grateful for the donations made by businesses, local organisations and individuals towards the cost of the lights despite tough economic times.

Our Remembrance Sunday commemoration took place but had to be pared back. The poppy cascade knitted by the Women's Institute looked stunning.

The Council's Internal Auditor, Jean Airey, a former Town Clerk of Keswick, regularly audits the Town Council's accounts and reports back to the Council. This year's annual accounts have been prepared and the Clerk will shortly be sending off the required Annual Return to the External District Auditor. The repeal of Section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 now allows enables the Town Council to finally embrace modern banking methods.

The Council continues to employ Tivoli as their Maintenance Contractor.

A 30-year lease was signed with Cockermouth Junior Football Club for their future use of Tarn Close Sports Ground. Their vision involves the creation of a football centre at Tarn Close for use by all teams in the town, junior, senior and veteran serving in the region of 500 members initially. Their long-term vision involves the erection of a synthetic indoor pitch to serve Cockermouth and the surrounding villages. A planning application will be submitted shortly.

Play areas and land at Greyrigg Avenue, Harris Park Extension, Isel Road, Towers Lane and Memorial Gardens continue to be maintained by Cockermouth Town Council. The Memorial Gardens play area was fully refurbished in 2019. The path crossing the Greyrigg Avenue site is to be restored.

The Localism Bill published on the 13 December 2010 aims to shift power from central

government back into the hands of individuals, communities and Councils by lifting the burden of bureaucracy, empowering communities and strengthening accountability to local people. A range of new powers and reforms will be introduced as a result of the Bill.

One of those new powers is the General Power of Competence (GPC). I am pleased to announce that on the 15 May 2019, the Town Council re-confirmed that it meets both criteria for eligibility for use of the General Power of Competence as set out in a statutory instrument known as the Parish Council's (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 which came into force in April 2012.

The new General Power of Competence will fundamentally change the way Local Government behaves, giving them the same capacity to act as an individual generally which will enable us to do anything apart from that which is specifically prohibited. This will result in greater innovation and a new more confident entrepreneurial approach which should in turn lead to greater efficiencies, improved partnership working and the ability to help our community in ways previously outside our remit.

The Town Council adopted a revised Code of Conduct on 17 July 2012. Copies of the Code can be obtained from our website. The long-awaited report of the Independent Committee on Standards in Public Life (previously the Nolan Committee) on Ethical Standards in Local Government was published on 4 February 2019. It contains a special chapter on town and parish councils and many of the 26 recommendations intend to promote and maintain the standards expected by the public, relate directly to them.

The Town Council continues to maintain three bus shelters two on Main Street and one on Castlegate Drive.

The Town Council has worked closely with a number of voluntary organisations regarding a series of events planned to mark the 100th anniversary of the Great War. The Town Council has adopted a flower bed adjacent to Gote Bridge on the Crown Street side. This is currently being leased to the Rotary to commemorate those lost during WW1. A re-dedication was held on 28 April 2019 following the refurbishment of the cenotaph.

Our speed indication device continues to be placed at 'speeding' hotspots around the Town. There have been issues with speeding down Gote Brow.

A community defibrillator has been installed in Kings Arms Lane. The Town Council continues to monitor and pay for the maintenance costs of this machine.

The Town Council were instrumental in the installation of cycle stands on the Main Street and

are now responsible for their maintenance.

Usage of our banner poles on the Main Street has declined.

Six pieces of adult fitness equipment were installed in Harris Park Extension on 7 May 2019 following the receipt of a 6k grant from the United Utilities Legacy Fund.

All four public toilets transferred to Cockermouth Town Council on 31 July 2017. The toilets on Main Street have been fully refurbished. We welcome news of a commitment to exempt public toilets from paying non-domestic rates as this will result in a saving of over £2k per annum.

The Council Chamber became an alternative venue for Cumbria County Council's Ceremony Room based in Fairfield. Our first wedding was held on 14 October 2016. I am pleased to announce that our licence has been extended for a further five years.

An artist Nem Sarton has completed the wall painting on Cocker Bridge to assist and encourage pedestrians/visitors to continue their journey along Main Street and explore what Market Place has to offer. The artist has used traditional techniques and materials. The Town Council will maintain the sign going forward.

We have become increasingly concerned about the increase in theft and anti-social behaviour. I am pleased to announce that we made a successful application to the Police and Crime Commissioner for £3k towards the cost of the installation and maintenance of a CCTV camera on Main Street. The camera was installed on 25 February 2021.

Cockermouth Town Council declared a climate change emergency on 19 June 2019. A list of simple, achievable actions were drawn up and a task group formed.

We have been researching best practise. We successfully obtained a grant from Cumbria Woodlands to plant 1,212 trees on Harris Park extension. Works must be completed by March 2022.

Our C1, C2 & C3 town bus service which started on 4 February 2020 has been maintained during lockdown.

Metalcraft Cockermouth Community Fund was launched in March 2020. Metalcraft hope this fund will help to ensure a diverse range of organisations can continue to operate and grow. Organisations must be based in Cockermouth parish and be 'not for profit' organisations operating for the benefit of the local community. Over £1500 of funding has been awarded to date.

The Coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented in peacetime Government measures in response to the crisis (e.g. prohibitions on gatherings, social distancing, self-isolation and

shielding of those deemed to be the most vulnerable have meant that the requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place cannot be met. The introduction of new regulations, The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (coronavirus) (flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings)(England and Wales) Regulations 2020 on 4 April 2020 has meant that we have had to work differently. Broadly speaking the Regulations enable us to hold remote meetings including by video and telephone conferencing for a specified period until May 2021. They also removed the requirement to hold an annual meeting. I will therefore continue as Mayor of Cockermouth until May 2021.

We have managed to maintain and operate all our services during the pandemic. I would like to thank all our staff for their hard work.

A consultation was launched in February 2021 seeking views on the locally-led proposals that the Secretary of State has received following his invitation to councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset. This consultation ends on 19 April 2021 and will shape our future structure. The implications for the areas and Councils are as yet unknown.

The Town Council contributed £750 towards the Chamber of Trade's plan to recruit an administrative and marketing assistant to assist with covid-19 business recovery.

The William Wordsworth Bust and Dorothy Wordsworth Fountain were restored and the general area tidied and daffodils planted to spruce up this area of town.

Finally, I would like to thank our NHS Staff and other key workers who are working so hard during this pandemic. I would also like to thank the thousands of volunteers who are helping the most vulnerable within our own communities. Please take a moment to reflect and remember all those we have lost.

The Town Clerk explained that covid had cost the Town Council around £13,500.00. This cost had been offset due to the cancelling of events. Our balances had remained similar at year end as at year start.

Observations from former County Councillor R Hanson

Covid Response

The Liberal Democrat Group of County Councillors met every week on zoom from the very beginning of first lockdown until a 'new normal' cycle of meetings on teams was established some months later. We worked tirelessly to collate and share information about what was going on in all aspects of life in Cumbria and to help design responses to complex issues.

The Cocker mouth response has been led to nationally leading standards by Cocker mouth Emergency Response Group (CERG) under the leadership of Jo Crozier with supported by our Cumbria CC team. I monitored everything that was happening carefully and was ready to support when gaps in provision (such as a particular problem with hospital transport) were identified.

I have participated in all the 'lessons learned from Covid19' meetings and have lobbied strongly for the estate changes which will make hybrid (mixed face-to-face and online) meetings possible in the future. This is much more complex than it sounds because virtually every type of meeting needs a different solution and hybrid meetings are so much more difficult to run than online meetings.

Many individuals and families in Cocker mouth are suffering very serious hardship and physical and mental health issues as a consequence of Covid19. I have compiled a directory of Covid support in Cocker mouth which I have circulated widely in Cocker mouth including to all Councillors. Anyone who would like a copy should contact me. Compiling this directory made me aware of the very many inspirational individuals and groups who are run, fund and volunteer for charities and support groups and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all these people.

Cocker mouth should also be extremely proud of Carolyn Otley who, in her work with Cumbria CVS, chaired the Cumbria Covid emergency response committee to an extraordinarily high standard which won the admiration and praise of all involved.

Oaktree Crescent

The resurfacing works on Oaktree Crescent were suspended mid-works at the start of first lockdown causing substantial inconvenience to some residents. I would like to thank all the residents of Oaktree Crescent who were incredibly tolerant of the problems they faced. Several particular issues associated with these works made it very difficult to restart works in a covid-safe way, however I worked hard with County Highways to ensure ways were found to restart and get these works completed before second lockdown.

Low Road Path

I have lobbied relentlessly for the completion of the cycle route on Low Road, raising this issue again and again in all sorts of meetings. Work on several potential sources of funding went nowhere, but Cumbria CC finally found a way to complete this path in late 2020 as part of the

resurfacing works on Low Road. Cumbria CC expect to be able to make the modifications needed to upgrade this path to become a cycle route soon.

Mobility Access

I have continued to take every opportunity to lobby for mobility access grants. We have gradually continued to increase our network of dropped kerbs on the All Saints side of town estate to extend the distance users of electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters can access comfortably and safely.

Readers should be aware that we have to justify grant applications with evidence that modifications will bring clear benefits to specific residents, so it's essential people who are having problems with kerbs and similar issues contact their county councillor or things won't improve.

South Street

High-quality resurfacing work was completed in late 2020 on Challoner Street and the Cocker end of South Street. This meant that the parking regulations on South Street became enforceable where previously the poor road surface led to road markings deteriorating rapidly. This has, understandably, caused a great deal of stress for residents. I have worked hard to answer queries, dispel incorrect rumours and ensure that all residents were very carefully informed about what was happening to make sure that nobody got a parking ticket by accident. Sadly, it is not possible to provide any more parking in this area because of national standards relating to the width of public roads.

Traffic Regulation Order Reviews

A substantial number of small changes to road markings were made. Some problems with the signage associated with the changes outside Harrisons Butchers on Main Street were identified. These have been rectified.

Communications

I have distributed around 6000 newsletters in the Cockermouth area (including to every house in Cockermouth) at least twice each year. These enable all residents to know when our town events are, what the answers to the key questions people are asking me are and where to get help if they need it. My thanks go to the many volunteers who help me deliver these leaflets.

I have blogged regularly and have invited comments on my blog (councillorrebeccahanson.wordpress.com) and my CouncillorRebeccaHanson Facebook page to provide maximum transparency and engagement regarding my actions.

I have responded to all enquiries received, meeting with residents whenever appropriate. I have dealt with over one hundred issues raised with me since my last report.

The Kirkgate Centre

The Kirkgate Centre has continued to receive funding from Cumbria County Council that I worked very hard to establish.

Cycle route maps

I have been lobbying hard for Cycle maps of the Allerdale area to be created and made easily available online (and ideally in print too). I've not had confirmation that this will be done yet, but it is now clearly very much at the forefront of the minds of key people. I would encourage others to continue to lobby for this to happen.

Other funding

I have also successfully supported CCC funding applications to help to fund youth and community activities at The Hub, the refurbishment the male toilets at Christ Church rooms and holiday workshops for children (currently deferred because of third lockdown).

Children's Services and Family Courts Issues

I supported one mother in Cockermouth who had had custody of her children incorrectly removed, working hard to ensure all reports relating to her case were made accurate after a social worker involved in it was struck off, and attending court twice with her. In doing so I came across other cases in West Cumbria which appeared to follow a similar pattern of failure. I asked our West Cumbrian MPs for their support in working on these issues (which amounted only to signatures on a key letter) and was profoundly shocked when this was refused. I have previously worked seamlessly on complex casework for people in Cumbria with all the MPs I have asked for help, including Sue Hayman, Jamie Reed, Rory Stewart and Tim Farron. Key politicians in West Cumbria from the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and the Independent Groups and many key figures working at national level have provided me with support on these profoundly complex issues and I would like to thank them all. Key Conservatives who initially made it categorically

clear that they wanted to help withdrew their support without explanation – presumably because they were leaned on from above.

Looking after the people who do masses for Cockermouth

Every year Cockermouth used to have a civic dinner which those in elected office and those who make substantial contributions to town life were encouraged to attend. It was where everyone got to know each other and it mattered that this happened. It was one of the things that fell by the wayside after the floods, and it was a big loss to Cockermouth.

As County Councillor I have tried hard to look after the people who do a lot for our town. I was particularly grateful that Lord and Lady Egremont understood how much this mattered and agreed to run a drinks event at the castle. It was wonderful to see so many inspirational people getting to know each other. They have promised to do this again in the future after Covid and I would encourage my successor/our mayor/our town clerk to hold them to that promise.

Wider County Issues

The Environment

In September 2019 I proposed and successfully won a motion at Full Council to make Cumbria (not just Cumbria County Council) carbon neutral. In doing so, I managed to force the conservative group to collectively reject the climate change denial position so many of their key members had publicly endorsed until then. I then helped to develop the Lib Dem County manifesto for this year's election which would have created a public mandate to deliver carbon neutrality in Cumbria and tackle the climate crisis. Sadly, the government cancelled the election, meaning that such a public mandate cannot be achieved. The Lib Dems will continue to try to deliver all that they can without such a mandate.

Health Scrutiny

On 3rd July 2019 we received confirmation that maternity services will be protected in Whitehaven. I had worked very hard on this for three years, initially by campaigning, then by writing the missing risk assessments and meeting with all stakeholders to ensure they properly understood the risk of closure and finally, as County Councillor, by attending many further meetings on this issue and by ensuring the long-term provision of maternity services in Whitehaven was raised and carefully discussed at every Health Scrutiny Meeting until it was resolved.

I then decided to champion the very serious issues with youth mental health services which Cockerthorpe residents were raising with me on doorsteps. I initially raised money for, organised and chaired an open access conference on this topic. From this a new co-production network, based in schools, emerged which I administrated and chaired for its first year. As this network was clearly needed for the long term, I persuaded Cumbria County Council to set up a new network which mirrored its functions. I would like, among others, to thank our local Cumbria County Council team for their hard work in supporting me with the initial conference and the first year of the network and Steve Milledge from Cockerthorpe School for his dedication to this network from the start. Steve now chairs the replacement network.

County Administration

While other counties suffer extreme difficulties in delivering core services, the Lib/Lab Cumbria County Council administration continues to function well and to make wise financial decisions despite now having had to cut around one third of its annual budget (amounting to cuts of approximately one quarter of a billion pounds a year) since 2011.

At all stages of the pandemic I have been inspired by the stunning leadership skills of senior managers, which several of them have recently unpacked and explained in detail in our 'lessons learned from Covid' sessions.

It is therefore eye-wateringly worrying to see the misinformed attacks which have been launched on County Council by leading Conservatives in West Cumbria.

Local Government Reform

Our conservative government is pushing through vast reforms in our Cumbrian Councils at breakneck speed in the middle of the pandemic. Reform has been suspended in most areas, but it being turbo-charged in Cumbria and its imminent implementation is the reason why most of this year's county elections have been suspended.

This process of reform shows many echoes of Brexit with key advocates in West Cumbria making wild claims about potential benefits of reform that do not stand up to scrutiny and with the need for work to be done on the very obvious and serious potential negative consequences of reform being ignored by advocates of change. Another similarity is that those demanding reform refuse to agree on what reform will look like and, instead, agree only that it will happen. The misinformed attacks on Cumbria County Council which are being made by key Conservatives in West Cumbria (who have consistently failed to demonstrate any understanding of the reality of

running Cumbria County Council and the complex statutory services provided by it) are of particular concern.

I have spent many weeks trying to do the detailed analysis of this which nobody else has done (just as I did with the pending closure of maternity services) and I will be publishing my conclusions in the next few weeks.

Final Thanks

It has been my absolute pleasure and privilege to serve as County Councillor for Cockermouth North for the last four years. Many are aware that I'm heartbroken that I can't continue, but I am hugely relieved that in Fiona Jayatilaka I have found a potential replacement who will complete the role to the standards I have set and which I know matter so much for Cockermouth.

I would like to thank the residents of Cockermouth who gave me the honour of trusting me in this role. I would also like to thank my elected colleagues of all parties and none who have been absolutely wonderful to work with over the last five years. Most of the public do not see how we work in a totally non-partisan way with tremendous respect for each other the vast majority of the time in the public interest both in Cockermouth and in County Council. This also used to be the case at MP level until 2019 and it is with the most enormous regret that I feel that it is my duty to point out the very significant change which happened when able and experienced MPs like Rory Stewart were expelled by their own party.

My final thanks go to the staff of Cockermouth Town Council and Cumbria County Council for their very hard work and to Julie Laidlow – our very hard working and dedicated mayor who has completed two years instead of just one.

Observations from County Councillor A Kennon

During this time all meetings have been conducted virtually using online platforms such as Zoom or Teams. These have been an excellent method to keep contact with most if not all parishes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Local Committee for Allerdale
- Allerdale Highways and Transport Working Group
- Scrutiny Advisory Board – Communities and Place

Funding for various schemes from my local area allowance to improve the town and surrounding areas has been reduced to £2000 per member this year and into the future.

Cockermouth specific:

£1,000 Cockermouth League of Friends - for the seating within the shelter at the surgery (your divisional funding)

£4,000 Christ Church rooms – towards new toilets (£1,000 you, £1000 Rebecca, £2000 community grant)

£1,000 Kirkgate – virtual arts and craft sessions (Rebecca's funding)

£1,100 King's Church – food to support those in need (DEFRA & DWP funds)

£1,100 Highfield Community Centre – food to support those in need (DEFRA & DWP funds)

£1,000 offered to football club

Allerdale wide:

£3,600 Fareshare – to support the food groups across Allerdale during April-June 2020

£10,000 CAB – to support those struggling financially in Allerdale (DEFRA fund)

£5,000 Age UK – to support those struggling financially in Allerdale (DEFRA fund)

£5,040 Affinity Credit Union – promoting healthy savings habits scheme (people save a regular amount and one they get to £60, this is topped up to £100) (DEFRA fund)

£10,000 Community Learning & Skills – cooking on a budget courses but with kitchen equipment and food included (DEFRA fund)

£2,950 Family Action – for emergency support with essential baby items (DEFRA fund)

£2,325 Baby Basics – to help set up an organisation who will provide start packs for new mums who are struggling financially (0-19 fund)

£4,500 Cumbria Youth Alliance – social action project encouraging young people to volunteer (0-19 fund)

£10,000 Christmas food parcel project – providing families who are struggling financially around £60 worth of food for Christmas day plus spare. We worked with the food groups and primary schools in Cockermouth plus we had referrals from Family Action, Children's Services etc. (DEFRA funding)

£38,000 to various organisations to support adult only households who are struggling financially. This was for food, utilities and any essential items to keep people warm and fed such as cookers, fridges etc)

Councillor Bennion asked Councillor Kennon to investigate more dropped kerbs and a pedestrian crossing on Lorton Road. Taking children and children in buggies to school was difficult and additional dropped kerbs and/or a pedestrian crossing would assist.

Observations from Allerdale councillor R Munby

- a) Attended Parish Council Embleton/Wythop/Isel and Blindcrake
- b) Attended Outside Body Cumbria Foundation
- c) Attended Licensing Committee and Development Panel
- d) Chair of ABC Licensing Committee

Shielded for over twelve months. All meetings attended via Zoom. Now known as 'Two jobs Munby'!

Observations from Allerdale Councillor A Semple

We have all had a difficult year and mine was not helped by recovering from a road traffic accident. So, it has not been the year I planned and I hope for better days ahead...

I am a member of the Development Panel and I have thus gained some really good experience which will benefit me and my community. There are big changes ahead in the planning world and I will be ensuring that Cockermouth's voice will be heard in any consultation.

Once the first Lockdown ended last year, I was pleased to work with Andrew Marshall from the Chamber of Commerce in ensuring that Station Street was sorted out, taking the needs of both local people and businesses into account.

I have been involved in an ongoing issue around ground maintenance in Harrot Hill and I have secured the commitment of the Chief Executive, Andrew Seekings, that the issue will be resolved to the benefit of residents.

I supported residents in Evening Hill and Albemarle Street in getting a flooding issue resolved through the County Council.

Looking ahead, I hope to support residents with plans to improve Harris Park and to do all I can to support businesses get back on their feet. Cockermouth really is a gem town and I will also ensure the cultural and leisure offers are maintained and enhanced for all local people and also to support our Tourism industry.

Observations from Allerdale Councillor Alan Smith

The past twelve months have been like living in some alternative universe with the Covid 19 Lockdown, this has had a big impact on Allerdale Borough Council, but through the professionalism of the Officers, the Council has still functioned, and delivered all the statutory roles, a very well done to the Officers and our Contractors, Tivoli and FCC.

The Cockermouth Leisure has remained closed for the lockdown but will open after April 12th.

I have finally got a resolution to the 'Puddle' on the Greenway outside the Cemetery Gates adjacent to Bellbrigg Park, this is soak away drain, and not a piped drain, and will come under pressure from sustained rainfall.

I still get lots of calls regarding social housing, so as I have a good repertoire with the Social Landlords I can usually find an answer to the questions and problems raised.

Hopefully with lockdown being relaxed I hope the town, shop keepers and the Kirkgate Centre will flourish, and I will see there is any help that Allerdale can give to get the town thriving again, and that the empty shops are filled with what the townspeople want.

Observations from Allerdale Councillor Alan Tyson

It was a privilege to be elected to Allerdale Borough Council to represent All Saints Ward in May 2019.

Initially I was put on the Development Panel along with three other Cockermouth Councillors, and became Deputy Chair of Audit Committee.

I also represented Allerdale BC at 2 sub-committees of the Nuclear Industry's WCSSG (West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group). Despite cancellation of a new Moorside Reactor, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, and Sellafield Ltd will remain major West Cumbrian employers and investors for the next 20 years. The WCSSG needs a vibrant, viable West Cumbria to continue investing and training local youngsters as tradesmen and engineering graduates. Equally Allerdale, Copeland and other Stakeholders need to fully support the Industry and scrutinise its present progress and future plans. Having worked on Sellafield waste development and disposal for 25 years I am well-suited to this scrutineer role in retirement.

In October 2019 I volunteered for two Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish groups. One involved the setting-up of Allerdale Waste Services to take household bin and recycling collections in house. This came to fruition in April 2020, and the service is now well-established. The other was the Climate Change TFG, a subject which has concerned me since the late 1960s. Hardly a short Task and Finish subject, global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas which produce carbon dioxide and other gases to form a layer trapping heat, like a greenhouse does,

in the lower atmosphere. To allow this to continue unabated would be catastrophic for our planet, for our children and grandchildren. Developed rich countries have ignored global warming for many years. Many, like the UK have set Country targets, without serious plans, to reach "net- zero greenhouse emissions" by 2050. Small islands, coastal cities and many UK cities and boroughs, including Allerdale, know 2030 is a more realistic "net-zero" and urgent action is required now. It will require changes in all our lifestyles, domestic heating, transport, environment and farming practices going forward BUT the changes to renewable energy will provide cleaner air and better, cheaper and healthier society for poorer people worldwide. The Allerdale Climate Action Plan is out for consultation now.

During 2021-22 I have retained my previous roles, but become Chair of the Audit Committee, in which I feel well-supported by members, independent of their political persuasions, and recently a member of the Licensing Panel. Of course, the last 12 months have been overshadowed by Covid-19. Many Cockermouthians will have lost friends and relatives during the year, and I extend my sympathies to all affected.

Allerdale has moved to meetings by Zoom during the year. I have been self-isolating for most of the year but kept busy by zoom.

I regret that Allerdale have removed their Hub-service from the Library. Cockermouth as many elderly people, not telephone or computer-literate who benefitted from this. I am all for more home-working for staff but feel removal of this service is a backwards step. However, I note that an appointment based system is now in operation in the Town Hall each Wednesday morning.

I am pleased to have encouraged Allerdale in supporting Cockermouth Chamber of Trade in publicising themselves and Town businesses in their recovery. I am now injected against Covid and look forward to getting into Town and All Saints more, which, of now includes the villages of Embleton, Wythop, Isel and Blindcrake.

Cockermouth and Papcastle Recreational Trust

The Town Clerk explained that the activities of the Trust had been suspended over the last 12 months due to corona virus. She indicated that the Trust would meet on 12 May 2021.

Questions of which 48 hours written notice had been given

No questions were received.

The meeting closed at 7.19 pm

