

**PLENMELLER WITH WHITFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Annual Parish Meeting on**  
**Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021**  
**at Whitfield**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

For the second year running less meetings than usual were held due to the ongoing pandemic with the Parish in full lockdown for most of the year. The only 2 meetings held were a socially distanced meeting in person in August 2020 and a Zoom meeting in January 2021.

For the same reason this report is relatively brief as there has been less activity as a result of lockdown.

The main noteworthy points to record during the year were as follows:

**1. Haltwhistle & District Joint Burial Committee:**

In March 2021 the Burial Committee received a letter from Melkridge Parish Council saying that they wished to withdraw from the joint burial arrangement. The Joint Burial Committee informed the Council of the situation and we await further information as to the outcome.

**2. Local Transport Plan:**

The Council made the same request of the Local Transport Plan for 2020 as for 2019 i.e.

- a. Widening C322 from the junction at Fell House to the Haltwhistle turn off. During the year it was confirmed this work would take place with widening commencing in summer 2021 and being completed over the next 2 or 3 years.
- b. Re-surfacing the road from Whitfield village to the school.  
This work was not granted although it was confirmed that it would be held under consideration and minor repairs would be made as required. Currently there are several areas with bad potholes on this stretch of road.

- c. A request was put in for a crash barrier at the Laws turning. This also was not allowed but consideration was being given to a SLOW sign on the road before the corner.

### 3. **Financial:**

The financial affairs of the Council have remained satisfactory during the year. Councillors agreed not to raise the precept for 2021 which therefore remains at £2,670.

### 4. **Risk Assessment and Internal Audit Assessment:**

The assessments were carried out with no alterations required.

### 5. **Planning:**

Planning applications concerning:

- Change of use for an outbuilding at Craghead to ancillary residential accommodation.
- The provision of an outdoor teaching structure at Whitfield School
- Variations to the conditions of a planning application for West Unthank Farm

were also considered during the year by the Councillors. None were considered to be contentious.

### 6. **Other Matters:**

Amongst the other matters considered by the Council during the year the most noteworthy were:

#### a. **Motor Cycles:**

Concerns are being raised over the speed at which traffic and in particular motorcycles pass through the village. A request was made to the recently appointed Inspector at Hexham Police Station for a community meeting with him in the Parish Hall at Whitfield when pandemic conditions allow. This was agreed but it has not been possible to hold the meeting as yet.

- b. Residents at Plenmeller requested the speed limit in the village be reduced from 40 – 30 mph and the Clerk wrote to NCC to request this.
  
- c. At the January meeting both Vice Chairman Ann Johnston and Councillor Marion Sowler announced that they wished to stand down as Councillors having both served in this capacity for a very long time. However, Vice Chairman Ann Johnston very kindly agreed to continue in her role for a while longer so as to avoid 2 vacancies at the same time.

It was agreed to advertise the vacancy for the forthcoming May elections.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Marion once more for her very long service as Councillor for our Parish and for her thoughtful and very constructive contribution over the years.

Thanks too as always to Councillor Hutchinson for his help and work in raising matters with Highways on the Council's behalf.

And, last but not least, thanks too, to our Clerk, Susan Saunders, for her quiet efficiency which has kept the whole show on the road even over the difficult last 12 months.