

## **PONSONBY PARISH COUNCIL.**

### **Chairman's Report May 2019.**

The Parish Council met regularly through the year, discharging Council business to the best of its ability, with a full complement of Councillors. We welcomed a new Councillor at the end of the year, Scott Robertson, who replaced David Birks and was appointed at the Parish Council elections of 2/5/19.

Our business through the year again had a key focus on proposals by NuGen, to develop a nuclear power station on the Moorside site, part of which lies within our Parish. Whilst our Council were not in principle against the development, we had major concerns about the way the project had developed and in particular ineffective consultation with ourselves by NuGen, the size and location of the facilities and proposals for road access and site infrastructure. We kept a watching brief whilst the project was put on hold (in light of the significant financial challenges facing their sole shareholder (Toshiba)) pending the proposed sale of NuGen to KEPCO. We continued to liaise with NuGen, Beckermeth with Thornhill PC to ensure our interests are aligned, and with Trudy Harrison to ensure she understood our position. Towards the end of the year Toshiba failed to find a buyer for NuGen and they wound the project up, ownership of the site returned to NDA. We met with NDA to ensure that if and when proposals for the development of the Moorside site resurface we are engaged constructively at an early date. We will also need to pick up on our concerns (impact near Pelham House) relating to the provision of any associated enhanced grid provisions (NWCC).

We have continued to interact with both Sellafield Ltd and NDA on activities at the Sellafield site and have played an active part in the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group. We continued to keep a close eye on the ongoing implementation of access and parking controls at the site to ensure no adverse effects on our Community. We have watched closely developments since the Government (BEIS) launched their search for a site for a Geological Disposal Facility, we do not believe our area should be nominated as a potential host Community.

Issues associated with roads and road traffic have continued to be important to us. In particular it is pleasing to note Cumbria Highways completed the second phase the significant improvements to surface water drainage on the road between Calderbridge and Ponsonby, and these have been effective in reducing the threat of flooding in the village, although we continue to be vigilant on drain cleaning. Traffic speed continues to be an issue both on the A595 and the Cold fell road. In both cases we continue to work with Cumbria Highways and Cumbria Constabulary to measure traffic volumes and speed in the hope that a police presence will help control instances of irresponsible driving, irresponsible and inconsiderate driving by some people is the biggest issue for Cold fell. Proposals by Cumbria Highways to consider traffic calming on the A595 at Calderbridge, and on the possible construction of a roundabout to ease traffic problems in Calderbridge, remained on hold because of lack of funding. Traffic data provided at the end of 2018 confirms the problem on the A595 still exists and we need to redouble our efforts to achieve some form of traffic calming.

Normal Council business, including the consideration of planning applications, has continued throughout the year. We have spent rate payer's money prudently, having minimised the need for increasing our precept beyond acceptable levels. We have reviewed the state of Parish assets; both bus shelters are structurally sound, at least one seat need to be replaced, Grassed areas have been cut regularly and we have plans in hand with CBC to improve shrubbery areas in the village and at Ponsonby road end. We have also commissioned a plaque to commemorate those servicemen from

the Parish who have served our Community over the years and this will be prominently displayed in the Village Hall.

A number of new issues arose during the year which we are managing on an ongoing basis as appropriate. The Boundary Commission review of Copeland Wards, placed the Parish in a single Borough Council Electoral Ward (Seascale and Gosforth). In May 2019 David Moore and Andy Platt became our Copeland Councillors. We are grateful for the support our previous Councillors, Yvonne and Sam, gave us through last year and for the ongoing support of Paul Turner, our County Councillor, when we needed it.

We have not been as successful as we would have liked in producing both a Community Plan, a very positive meeting was held with Villagers to identify the key issues for the plan and start to identify support to help delivery. The next stage will be to get those people together in mid-June to move things forward.

Looking forward to the next year our priorities will be to:

1. Continue to represent our Parishioners to the best of our ability when discharging routine Parish business.
2. Help our Community to produce and implement a Community plan laying down the key things we want to achieve together.
3. Continue to seek improvements in traffic management through our village.
4. Monitor the developing situation with GDF closely and react to developments in the best interests of our Parish.
5. Produce a succession plan for the Council.

Bob Jones, Chairman. May 2019.