

CHAIRPERSON'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023/24 – ELAINE WOODBURN

2023/24 was a year of ups and downs but in the life of Egremont Town Council, it could be argued “What’s new”? In reality, that is what we are here for, to manage the ups and downs of the parish we represent.

We started with the loss of Councillors Neil Ferguson (who served on the Town Council for 7 years) and Tom Higgins (who served for 6 years) and who both took the decision to not stand for re-election. Neil in particular should be remembered for the shifts he put in during covid, a time that drained everyone and a time that as a parish, we have not 100% recovered from.

In 2023, we welcomed Chris Whiteside, a long-standing County and Borough Councillor who has brought his knowledge and work ethic to the Council and he is proving to be a real asset.

After a lot of years being discussed but nothing happening, the public realm works were finalised and this has given us a much improved Main Street, the only disappointment being the mares tail weed which has invaded many of the planters. Work is ongoing to correct this and we as a Town Council, will not formerly take on the maintenance and responsibility until this matter is resolved. We won't however lose sight of the improvement and the success of project delivery.

We have invested time and resources into cemetery house preparing it for a new tenant only to have other issues identified resulting in the house, as yet, remaining vacant, we hope to have these issues resolved as soon as possible so the tenant can move in and the house becomes occupied again as it should be.

As a Council, we continue to work well together including having the strength to make difficult decisions, one of those being the transfer of Sandholes allotment site, (which had been managed for many years by Egremont Town Council), back to Cumberland Council, this decision has now allowed us to concentrate our efforts on those sites in our ownership.

We have welcomed our two new Cumberland Councillors – Graham Minshaw & Sam Pollen who regularly attend our meetings to keep us updated on Cumberland matters and we have also welcomed officers from Cumberland Council who advocate wanting to work more closely together. Improvements have definitely been made and we hope this continues proving beneficial for us both.

Challenges however still lie in front of us - cemetery chapels, the need for increased usage in the Market Hall, expensive financial calls on a limited budget etc but the Council continues to financially perform to a high standard and thanks needs to go to our staff for their tireless work and dedication which are both appreciated.

Egremont Town Council has to be the best Council to be part of, we work well together and continually strive to do what we can for our residents.

The Chairperson's role is never easy but with the Councillors' and the staffs' support, it is enjoyable, more importantly though, is that we collectively deliver and with this dedication and hard work, we can proudly defend our record and improve the lives of those we represent.