

# Cumberland & Westmorland Herald

AT THE HEART OF YOU COUNTY SINCE 1860

## Spud ap-peel

Great turnout for potato day  
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## Century of friendship

WI celebrating 100-year milestone  
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## Special Mother's Day feature

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# Village roads full of holes, finds pothole survey

By Ellis Butcher

A STAGGERING number of potholes have been found and charted across an Eden parish.

A total of 277 were logged across Kirkoswald in an exercise — never carried out before — by its parish council.

And that figure may soar to around 350 once they have been cross-referenced against a list of 105 potholes which the highways authority, Westmorland and Furness Council, knew about.

It also raises questions about how many potholes there truly are across Eden, which is home to more than 72 parishes.

Kirkoswald parish clerk Nick Phillips and council chairman Jonathon Little spent three and half hours going around the large rural parish and charting every hole they found in the road.

The location of each pothole was then precisely pinpointed using GPS technology and given a unique name — with a vast spreadsheet of data now passed to highways chiefs in charge of maintenance.

In response, a “jet-patching” visit has been promised

but, due to the sheer number of potholes, parish councillors believe it is probable that not all of them will be fixed.

Mr Phillips said: “The parish needs a lot of work doing but the highways authority is strapped for cash and hasn’t got the money to get around and do them all. To be honest I don’t think the total number has surprised anyone. I think it’s what people were expecting because they only need to drive around here to know how bad the roads are.”

The Kirkoswald survey was carried out because pothole complaints have almost become a standing item on the parish council agenda.

Mary Robinson, who represents Alston and Fellside on Westmorland and Furness Council, said many potholes across the area are “at best poor and at worst downright dangerous”.

She said: “This is not an attack on the highways team of the council as it hasn’t got the resources to keep on top of our roads — this starts with the government funding and the leadership of Westmorland and Furness Council.”

Ms Robinson, leader of the

council independent group, said the way government funding is handed down to local councils in late December — rather than the old regime of being on a three-year basis — meant councils could not properly plan their spending or works — keeping highways bosses guessing on how far their budgets would go.

She paid out more than £1,000 last year after a pothole damaged her car and said that instead of temporarily patching potholes, deeper, more expensive and longer works are required on some of the area’s broken roads.

Ms Robinson named the B6413 Plumpton to Brampton road as one of the worst for potholes.

It was a problem exacerbated, she said, by the volume of run-off water from the North Pennines, which floods rural roads, freezes in winter and breaks up surfaces.

Meanwhile, a motorist has told the *Herald* of his immense frustration in trying to claw back compensation from Westmorland and Furness Council after a tyre was wrecked by two pot holes.

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**BLOOMING AMBITION:** Penrith-based senior paramedic Heather Beedie, North West Ambulance Charity fundraising manager Roya Armstrong, Larch Cottage Nursery owners Peter and Jo Stott and community resuscitation development officer Nikolas Schickhoff at the launch of the Angela McLean Memorial Fund.

# Fund launched in Angela’s memory

PROCEEDS from the sale of a rose at an Eden nursery will form part of fundraising drive in memory of a much-loved colleague who died at work.

Angela McLean, of Calthwaite, who was the office manager at Larch Cottage Nurseries, Melkintorpe, died suddenly while working at her desk on 30th

November, last year, aged 55. Jo Stott, who owns the business along with her husband Peter, said: “One moment she was fine and the next moment she wasn’t. It was so sudden.”

“She was everybody’s friend and very professional.”

Although Angela had only worked at

the nursery for just under a year, “it felt like forever because of the person that she was,” said Jo.

Previously, Angela had worked at the Crown at Wetheral for 17 years, but her family said she had never been happier than when she was working at Larch

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# Penrith premiere for swim film



**MAKING A SPLASH:** Jenny Prosser, Kit Hollings and Julia Aglionby, whose film about swimming the River Eden was shown at the Alhambra Cinema.

THREE intrepid Cumbrian women who swam the length of the River Eden last summer held the first public screening of their short documentary film at Penrith Alhambra’s regular “Green Screen” event, organised by the cinema and local climate action groups, on Wednesday night.

Julia Aglionby, Jenny Prosser and Kit Hollings all regularly swim in the river near their homes in Armthwaite, but last summer under the strapline *View from the River* decided to swim the Eden in its entirety to raise awareness of water pollution. The 80-mile stretch of water is one of the most polluted riv-

ers in the country, with 2022 seeing sewage dumped into it for a combined total of 11,780 hours across 23 different sites.

The trio started their journey at the river’s source at Mallerstang, just south of Kirkby Stephen, and ended at the Solway Estuary, taking 15 days to do the swim in summer 2023. Their trip was turned into a short documentary film by Jenny’s daughter Rosa Prosser. The film features the logistical challenges of the trip, the spectacular scenery along the river and the wildlife encountered along the way. Funding from the North Pennines AONB

Partnership’s Fellfoot Forward Landscape Partnership Scheme, supported by the National Lottery made the film possible.

After the screening of their short film, the swimmers fielded a number of questions from the thoughtful audience. There was also a screening of the epic feature length documentary *River*, directed by Australian Jennifer Peedom and narrated by Daniel Dafoe.

Julia, who is the Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate for Penrith and Solway, said: “Cumbria is lucky to be home to a number of stunningly picturesque rivers such as the Derwent and the Cocker as well as the Eden. However, last year, Penrith and the Border and Workington faced the second and third highest number of sewage outflows of any constituency in England. Despite this, the boss of United Utilities received around £1.4m in remuneration last year. Our aim with this swim was to raise awareness of how shockingly poorly our waterways have been managed. Something has to change or future generations of Cumbrians will be robbed of their natural heritage.”

Over the next year, the *View from the River* team are planning to assess the impact of the sewage outflows along the Eden and are looking for volunteers. Jenny Prosser said: “We are looking for 12 people to join our FreshwaterWatch Citizen Science team to take monthly samples. Training will be provided. Please contact us via Eden Rivers Trust with whom we are partnering.”

# Plans for bar expansion

A POPULAR Penrith hotel and bar looks set to expand into former newspaper offices.

Mark Bowman, of RHM (Cumbria) Ltd, is seeking planning permission and listed building approval to extend the King Street-based Lounge Hotel and Bar into offices recently vacated by the *Cumberland & Westmorland Herald*.

The newspaper relocated to new premises in Middlegate about six months ago.

Information accompanying the application states: “Since the *Cumberland & Westmorland Herald* ceased to manufacture and distribute the newspaper from the premises at 14 King Street, Penrith, the buildings to the rear of the sales and administrative offices were no longer required and the owners made the decision to sell the whole site and lease back the frontage offices to continue producing the paper.”

“RHM (Cumbria) Ltd has now converted the rear production areas on two floors, expanding

their Lounge Hotel and Bar facilities by linking through the party wall from the Lounge at both ground and first floor levels to create additional bar and eating spaces with associated food preparation, storage, toilet accommodation and additional hotel bedrooms.

“The proposed conversion of the now vacated ground, first and second floor offices which front on to King Street will provide much needed additional bar, dining, function room, kitchen, storage and toilet facilities.”

Existing parking areas would be retained for staff and guests. The Lounge Bar and Hotel, Mitre House, 12 King Street (formerly the Mitre Hotel and pub) is a Grade II listed building.

The Mitre Inn was built in 1669 and rebuilt in 1904, retaining its first door which had lasted for 250 years. The date is carved on the moulded and shaped lintel.

There is also plaque in memory of Trooper William Pearson, who survived the Charge of the Light Brigade.

# Bridge shutdown sparks backlash

THE “emergency” closure of a vital bridge linking Penrith to Alston sparked a public backlash this week.

The original 300-year-old Langwathby bridge was destroyed during a storm 54 years ago this month, with the existing “temporary” girder bridge then put in place.

On Wednesday, just after 9am, Westmorland and Furness Council circulated news that the A686 at Langwathby Bridge would close at 8pm until 6am for three consecutive nights for “essential” maintenance works.

But online critics flooded the council’s Facebook page with comments as it meant a diversion of more than 11 miles on the B6412 to Culgaith and the A66.

“Loads of advance warning about this closure!” said one. Others questioned why — if the works were an “emergency” as the council maintained — road users could use still the bridge between 6am and 8pm.

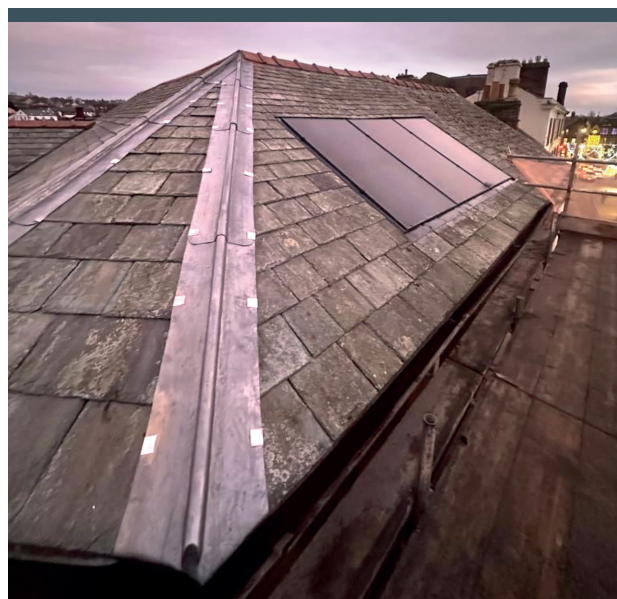
“Not much of an emergency, is it?” they said, while another asked: “Emergency closure, or just pretend?”

One commentator called the nightly closure “majorly inconvenient and annoying to those needing to get to and from Penrith after 8pm”.

The council said works are expected to be completed by 6am on Saturday, 2nd March, and thanked the local community for their patience.

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