

## **CUMBERLAND & WESTMORLAND HERALD IPSO ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Cumberland and Westmorland Herald, established in 1860, went into administration during early 2020.

The newspaper is independent weekly broadsheet covering a large area of East Cumbria, including the towns of Penrith, Appleby, Kirkby Stephen, Keswick and Alston. However, plagued with declining sales, declining advertising revenue and increased costs and a pension deficit, its fate was sealed.

It was bought by local businessman and engineer Andy Barr in February 2020. It continues to trade, now under Barrnon Media Ltd.

### **The history**

The newspaper has been published under a number of different titles including: Penrith Herald, Appleby & Kirkby Stephen Herald, and Mid Cumberland & North Westmorland Herald. Since 1925 it has been published under its present title, Cumberland & Westmorland Herald.

The paper is gained national exposure when it revealed in 2015 that the then Cumbria police and crime commissioner had undertaken chauffeur-driven journeys at the time of cuts in the police service, with three people subsequently being arrested in connection with leaking the information.

### **2019**

In his 2019 message to shareholders chairman Bill Mossop said: “The financial year has again proved a challenging one in the newspaper industry. A number of long-standing advertising clients have chosen to use only online countryside advertising, which has had an immediate effect on the newspaper.

“Newspaper sales continue to decline overall, although where reporting resources have been deployed into the outer circulation area there have been some small increases. However, there has been more widespread engagement with readers via the newspapers expanding social media platforms.

“Once again the newspaper has cut its operating costs with staff members not being replaced when leaving, a redundancy and a restructuring of the advertising and production departments which are now under one manager.”

## **Today**

The newspaper still offers its Eden community local news coverage, which includes a high content of reports and pictures of events, as well as extensive classified advertising, account for the strength of the newspaper and its popularity. It's online platform is in need of a makeover.

Despite its new ownership, the publishing company still has three main departments, editorial, advertising and production. The new managing director is John Holliday and the editor Emily Atherton. She became the first woman and only the 8<sup>th</sup> editor in the Herald's history when appointed in September 2019.

The Cumberland & Westmorland Herald is printed by Newsquest, Glasgow.

The circulation figure, certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulation in 2019, stands at c10,500 copies sold on average every Saturday (ABC January to December, 2019). This includes c600 copies mailed out to subscribers each week.

## **Editorial standards**

The Herald still adheres to the Editors' Code of Practice, which, like most newspaper publishers in Britain, it considers to be a sound statement of ethical behaviour for journalists. It strives to ensure that its articles are fair and accurate, and that readers have a right of reply if there is something they do not agree with.

As it is an established newspaper that is viewed as a matter of record, its journalists are well aware of how vital accurate reporting is in maintaining the public's trust.

The newspaper has not yet sought guidance from IPSO on the publication of one of its articles, but would do so if it was considered to potentially be in breach of the code of practice.

## **Complaints handling process**

Editorial complaints are accepted in the first instance by letter, telephone or e-mail. Depending on the extent of the complaint, for instance a minor correction or clarification, it can be firstly handled by an experienced journalist or the news editor/deputy editor before being passed on to the editor. Any complaints that have legal implications are immediately lodged with the editor – and the MD is made aware.

A record, either in e-mail format or hard copy, is kept of all complaints received and what action, if any, has been taken.

We accept that complaints should be resolved as quickly as possible and hope this can be

achieved in direct negotiation with the complainant, and an apology published where appropriate. Any complaints that have legal implications are dealt with in conjunction with legal advisers from the News Media Association and, if needed, lawyers are engaged.

A column for corrections and clarifications appears, as and when required, on Page 7. Also on Page 7 in every edition is a statement that the Herald abides by the IPSO code of practice. It also informs readers that if they want to make representations about articles they should write in the first instance to the editor and that, if not satisfied, they can contact IPSO, whose postal address, e-mail address, telephone number and website details are provided.

### **Training process**

The newspaper has historically run, on a refresher basis, training for its journalists in legal matters and responsibilities, but none of late. Training will be given as and when it is considered appropriate. Journalists are issued with a copy of the code of practice. There are ongoing internal discussions on developments in law and legislation which impacts on journalism.

The Company has a long association with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ).

### **Record on compliance**

To my knowledge, from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2019, to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019, there were no complaints against the publisher which have been ruled on by IPSO's Complaints Committee, and no incidents in relation to which the publisher accepted that it had breached the editors' code, or which otherwise raised significant concerns about compliance with the editors' code.

During the period there were a small number of complaints which were resolved satisfactorily via dialogue and explanation and the remainder were factual inaccuracies which were corrected at the earliest available opportunity.

Signed

John Holliday  
IPSO responsible person

Date 23rd March 2020.