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February 19, 2019

Mrs. Sue Protheroe
Friends of Dunchurch Society
Village Green House,
The Green, Dunchurch UK
CV22 6NX

Dear Ms. Protheroe:

I am very pleased to bring you greetings from the Village of Dunchurch, Ontario, Canada on behalf of the Council of the Municipality of Whitestone.

It was less than 150 years ago that our small village in the Parry Sound District of Ontario was first carved out of the wilderness. Although a Treaty had been signed in 1850 with the First Nations of the area, the land continued to be used by First Nations as hunting and fishing grounds when settlers first arrived in 1870. Those settlers came to our area because of the promise of free land. Two hundred acres each were made to the heads of families with children and one hundred acres to childless couples. That promise of free land and of a new life brought settlers from other parts of southern Ontario and, very importantly from the British Isles, to our area.

By 1878, only 8 years after it was first settled, Dunchurch had become a 'bustling' community boasting a store, post office, steam saw mill, blacksmith shop and wagon-maker's shop, Union meeting house, Methodist Church, and school house. In 1880, a hotel was built (a combination pub and rooming house). By 1900, our little village had two hotels each with its own livery, two general stores, a saw-mill, public school and three churches; Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican. There was a doctor's office and dispensary.

It was not by accident that our little village got its name. The founders of our village were George Kelcey and his wife Lucy Ann Manning, both of whom had been born in Rugby, Warwickshire, England. George was appointed Post Master October 1, 1875. It was George Kelcey that changed the name of the new community from Newcombe to Dunchurch after his ancestral home.

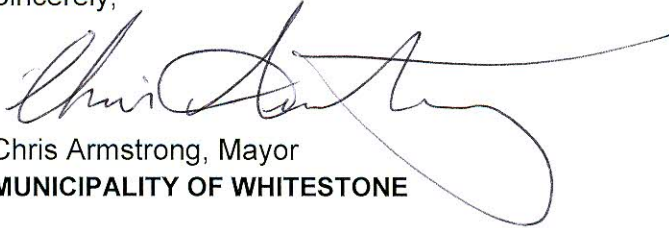
The Kelcey's established the first store, the first saw mill, the first blacksmith shop and the first hotel in Dunchurch as well as the building that ultimately became the community hall. In 1880, the capital they brought over, augmented by the prospering enterprise in Dunchurch, enabled them to send their two oldest children, a boy and a girl, back to Rugby, England for three years

of schooling. After George Kelcey's death on June 17, 1884 Lucy Ann continued to play a lead role in the community.

In the 1880's Lucy Kelcey's sister Eliza Manning and Eliza's husband Walter Markham and their family also came to Canada where they too settled in Dunchurch. Eliza and Walter had also been born in Rugby which is where they married and where several of their children were born. Walter and Elizabeth became a leading part of the Dunchurch, Ontario social scene. Eliza Markham was instrumental in the establishment of the Dunchurch Women's Institute and served as the Institutes first president. The Women's Institute initially directed its efforts in support of the First World War and then branched off into other important community work. This included historical research and recording during the 1970's and early 1980's as part of what were called the Tweedsmuir Village Histories, conducted under the auspices of Lady Tweedsmuir, the wife of Canada's Governor General. In the third of three history books prepared by the Women's Institute, our village's connection with yours is explained along with a picture of "the stocks and Dun Cow Hotel, Dunchurch, England".

We truly wish the Friends of Dunchurch Society every success in your many ventures. We look forward to an ongoing association with your Society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chris Armstrong", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Armstrong, Mayor
MUNICIPALITY OF WHITESTONE

c Andrew Houser, Whitestone Historical Society