

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL, COCKERMOUTH ON
WEDNESDAY 23rd APRIL 2025**

Chair: Councillor R Watson, Town Mayor

Also present: Cumberland Councillors Semple and Tucker; David Allen, Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner; Cllr Alan Smith, Chair of Cockermouth & Papcastle Recreational Trust; Tony Carroll and Colleague, Andy's Man Club; Tom Speight, Cockermouth Live!; Town Clerk Mrs J Ollerenshaw; 35 other attendees.

Meeting started at 19:00

T01/25 Apologies. None.

T02/25 Minutes. Resolved to approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 24th April 2024.

T03/25 The Mayor's Annual Report on behalf of the Town Council. Cllr Watson gave his annual report, which is attached as appendix A.

T04/25 Cumberland Councillors' Report. Cllrs Semple and Tucker had submitted a written report which is attached as appendix B. Cllr Tucker gave an overview of their report. Cllr Semple explained the importance of giving funding to the projects mentioned as they give opportunities to all. The Cockermouth Mechanics Brass Band was celebrating its 200th anniversary and a special piece of music was to be commissioned from the funding that had been awarded.

T05/25 David Allen. Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner. Mr Allen gave a report to the meeting which is attached as appendix C. In addition to the report, he explained that the additional government funding that they had received had been spent on increased patrols and he would continue to lobby for additional funding from the government. He added that the graduated driving licence had been introduced in New Zealand with a 25% reduction in the number of deaths of young people in road collisions. His Community Fund gave out grants of £2,500 to youth projects which helped to divert youth away from crime.

T06/25 Cllr Alan Smith, Chair of Cockermouth and Papcastle Recreational Trust. Cllr Smith said that the Trust meets twice per year and people can apply for funding towards recreational projects within the area. He would be happy to answer any questions. The Trust's report is attached as appendix D.

T07/25 Question and answer session: Questions were invited from the audience.

- **Q.** Alan Clouston addressed Cllrs Laidlow, Malloy and Smith, who were on the Council in 2017, and supported the transfer of the library from Cumbria County Council to Cockermouth Town Council, costing in excess of a third of a million pounds to take over

the library service which was not under threat. The only evidence they could find was a proposed reduction in opening times by 6 hours, later reduced to 4, which could have been supplemented by the Town Council if thought necessary at a reduced cost. The Town Council has resolved to transfer the library back to Cumberland Council and staff have already been TUPE'd. Why did these councillors vote against the move and can they justify or apologise for the waste of over £300,000 made by their original decision.

- **A.** Cllr Smith said that when the Town Council took on the library it was a failing service and there was a public outcry that there was a chance of it closing. He said that Cllr Watson led the "Save our Library" campaign [Friends of Cockermouth Library]. The Town Council had taken it from a failing service to a successful one that was safe in the Town Council's hands. The Town Council now had no control over it and there is nothing to stop Cumberland Council from closing the library to make budget savings. He had not been on the Council for two years and he was horrified that nothing had been done to take forward an SLA to help with funding.
- **A.** Cllr Laidlow said that she would not apologise for anything as the library was an asset that had been gifted to the Town and she would not sign for it to go back to Cumberland. She said that there was another building that was going to become empty in the Town and she said that Cumberland Council would move the library into that building and sell the current library building. She said to mark her words. People would then complain because the library was in an old building, so she made no apology for voting against signing the library back over to Cumberland Council.
- **A.** Cllr Malloy said that it was a failing service, and the only reason the costs had escalated was because the Town Council had been let down by Cumbria County Council who withdrew their staff. The latest figures in the library show over 3,000 people a month use the library which is a testament to those on the Town Council at that time.
- **Response** from Mr Clouston. It has cost £340 for every man, woman and child in Cockermouth, a third of a million pounds, which has been wasted because Cumbria County Council would have kept the library going, there was no evidence to the contrary, nothing at all, having searched everywhere, including in Council minutes.
- **Q.** Sharon Watson asked the councillors to define "failing" as they had suggested about the library.
- **A.** Cllr Smith said that it was the number of people using it, that they were right down.
- **Response** from Mrs Watson who refuted that the numbers were down. She had been one of the leaders of the Friends of Cockermouth Library group and they had the figures, which showed that it was one of the best used libraries in Cumbria at the time.
- **Q.** Cllr Laidlow recognised the funding given to the Park Run and Active Travel events, which support mental wellbeing, but asked Cllr Semple what was being done to reinstate the bus service for the elderly to support their mental wellbeing.
- **A.** Cllr Semple said that the S106 agreement had ended at the end of February and Cumberland Council had been given money for transport following the scrapping of HS2. A consultation had been held and the bus service officers had met with Town Councillors. He could absolutely guarantee that the library is safe with Cumberland, and he could also absolutely guarantee that there would be something done to support a

bus service. It might not be the same, it might need to be altered, but something would be put in place.

- **Q.** Cllr Laidlow asked Cllr Semple about a tree that had been cut down on Station Street. She asked that the tree, and another that had been knocked down on Station Street, both be replaced.
- **A.** Cllrs Semple, Tucker and Watson said that there had been a number of emails. Cllr Watson said that he had seen correspondence which indicated that the trees would be replaced.
- **Response.** A member of the public said that there had been nothing wrong with the tree and cutting it down was vandalism. She looked to the Cumberland Councillors to ensure that they were replaced.
- **Q.** A member of the public said that it was difficult to hear what was being said at Town Council meetings and they felt slightly unwelcome due to the seating arrangements, as they were looking at the backs of some members. He suggested tables at the front of the room.
- **A.** Cllr Watson said that he understood the problem but had been unable to find a workable solution.
- **A.** Cllr Smith said that he thought there was a microphone system. Moving the table each meeting would be too difficult.
- **Q.** Cllr Malloy asked David Allen if there could be some random speed checks as there was an issue with speeding in the Town.
- **A.** Mr Allen said that they would look at issues if the Council could write to him and identify the areas affected.
- **Q.** Cllr Burns asked Cllr Tucker if there was any news on the Old Courthouse, as people were concerned with the amount of rubble falling into the river.
- **A.** Cllr Tucker said that the building was the responsibility of the owner and what was in the river was the responsibility of the Environment Agency.
- **Q.** A member of the public asked David Allen about graduated driving licences. He was a parent of two learners so was interested to know what timeframe they were working to.
- **A.** Mr Allen said that it was down to the Ministry of Transport which worked slowly, but members of the association of Crime Commissioners were working together to push for this, and they had the support of all Cumbrian MPs. In time it would go forward as a private member's bill, but they needed support from more MPs, some of whom saw it as an infringement on civil liberties.
- **Q.** A member of the public said that there had been red squirrel sightings on the site of the proposed Sidings development, and it had been asked to be called in by the Secretary of State. She asked if there was any news on this.
- **A.** Cllr Semple said it had still to be determined by the planning committee, and it could only be called in by the Secretary of State after the committee had reached their decision.
- **A.** Cllr Tucker said that neither she nor Cllr Semple could express an opinion as they were both involved with the planning committee.

- **Response.** A member of the public said that they could represent the community's views and apply pressure on their behalf.
- **A.** Cllr Telford said that she had objected to the development before she became a councillor, and the Town Council has objected to the application at every opportunity.
- **Q.** Cllr Laidlow asked the Cumberland councillors if they could assist the owner of the Old Courthouse in calling a public meeting. He felt that he had not been given an opportunity to put his case forward, and people had only heard from Cumberland Council.
- **A.** Cllr Semple said that Cumberland Council rely on advice from experts regarding any action taken on the Old Courthouse. He is satisfied that Cumberland Council acted correctly. The technical information has now come back to say that the building is not a threat to public safety. The building is in private ownership, so he is not able to hold a public meeting about a private matter.

There was a short break for refreshments.

T08/25 Andy's Man Club. Tony Carroll and John spoke about the work of Andy's Man Club which is suicide prevention charity, formed in 2016 by Luke Ambler, following the death of a 23-year-old man. In Cockermouth they are held in the James Walker building on Mondays between 7pm and 9pm. There are now more than 270 clubs throughout the UK.

Tony is the lead facilitator for the area, but there are three that run the Cockermouth group. People are encouraged to participate, but can share as much or as little as they are comfortable with. They have a coffee break and an informal time to get to know each other. They are able to refer people where they feel they are risk.

People gain confidence with being able to speak to others. People can just turn up on the night and they make friends in the group. Although it's confidential, people within the group can exchange numbers if they wish. Most meetings have 12-18 attendees.

The club is a support network and it helps attendees to understand that it's ok to talk and express how you're feeling. They are supported by local companies, James Walker who provide the room and the One-Stop have donated biscuits.

T09/25 Cockermouth Live! Tom Speight explained that he was the Chair of the planning committee for Cockermouth Live! It is a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers. He played a short film to show some of the events that they had held in the previous year.

Chris Billinge had been approaching venues in Cockermouth and it is hoped that there will be a total of about 23 participating venues. The dates for this year are July 3rd – 6th

The full report from Tom Speight is attached as appendix E.

T10/25 Question and answer session. Questions were invited from the audience:

- **Q.** Cllr Laidlow asked Andy's Man Club if there was something similar for women.
- **A.** Mr Carroll said that he was not aware of anything specifically, but the concern of their club was that men in particular did not open up about their feelings.
- **Q.** Cllr Laidlow asked if the number of visitors at 4,000 was correct as she didn't think that was a very high number for the number of performances and venues.
- **A.** Mr Speight said that he thought that was quite a high number.
- **Response.** A member of the public said that if there were 80 performances and 4,000 visitors, it meant that there were 50 attendees at each performance on average.
- **Response.** A member of the public said that there was also the Happy Mums group for women to attend.
- **Q.** Cllr Malloy asked what the age group was for people attending Andy's Man Club.
- **A.** Mr Carroll said that there was a wide range from early 20s to late 70s.
- **Q.** A member of the public asked if special arrangements could be made for farmers who may have trouble finding the time to leave the farm and attend meetings.
- **A.** Mr Carroll said that they had looked into this and raised it with head office. The Wigton group was set up with this in mind, but there were low attendance numbers.

There were no further questions, so the Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 21:20

Cockermouth Annual Town Meeting, 23rd April 2025

Mayor's Report

This has been the first full year of employment with the council for our new town clerk, Jane Ollerenshaw, who started in the role in February last year. With Jane's excellent guidance we have been able to undertake a number of much-needed reforms and modernisations.

It has therefore been a busy year for the town council with our monthly meetings sometimes continuing beyond the two-hour limit stipulated in standing orders - which can be done with the agreement of the meeting. There has been a great deal of business to get through and every opportunity has been given for it to be scrutinised and amended where appropriate.

During the year the council has made progress in the following areas:

Budgets and financial matters

Budgets are now presented on a spreadsheet making them transparent and easy to read, with figures representing the actual amount expended. Previously we relied upon a Word document and notional figures.

The annual budget is now drafted in November giving two months and three full council meetings for any councillor to propose amendments before the budget is finalised in January. Previously there was no such thing as a draft budget, and no opportunity for the council to discuss its aspirations for the coming year and set a budget to reflect them.

We have a plan for building up the council's financial reserves which had previously been allowed to run down to an unacceptable level, resulting in a warning from the auditors.

Deposit accounts have been moved to banks offering higher interest, as previously these languished in accounts offering poor rates. We gained an additional £8,000 in interest in 2024/5 as a result.

Thanks to sound financial planning we are able to plan for a number of improvements to services in the coming year and at the same time reduce the precept (the portion of the council tax which is levied by the town council).

Staffing matters

All staff, including the town clerk, now have formal meetings with their line manager and an annual appraisal. This did not happen previously. Pay scales and salary points have been reviewed. The town hall staff are now all enrolled on the Local Government Pension Scheme, and both assistant staff have been encouraged to join a trade union.

Minutes and agenda

An agenda item request form now ensures that councillors carefully consider proposals for discussion and resolution. No more agenda items which just say 'potholes'. Minutes of meetings are sent out in draft form so that they can be amended before being formally adopted at the next meeting. This did not happen previously.

Policies and procedures

Many council policies were a decade out of date or simply did not exist. We have addressed this with new and updated policies and an updated staff handbook so that councillors and staff are clear about what they may and may not responsibly do. We did not, for example, have a clear, up-to-date procedure for handling complaints, leading to these being dealt with in an ad hoc, unregulated manner. Nor did we have a communications and media policy.

Grants to local organisations

For many years the council budget for giving grants to local organisations was just £1,000 a year, plus a number of regular fixed donations which brought it up to around £6,000 a year. We have now increased this budget to £15,000 a year. There is a formal applications system in place and local groups are invited to apply for grant aid. Please speak to Jane if your group would like to apply.

Buildings and rents

The town hall roof has been repaired and insulated, making space on the top floor safe for tenants and helping to lower heating costs.

Many organisations renting space in the town hall had not had their rent reviewed for many years, and nor were they being asked to contribute fairly to the rising cost of gas and electricity. This has been addressed and as a result the town council – and the taxpayer – can expect to be some £20,000 a year better off.

We continue to offer simple, affordable weddings service in the town hall. Prices have been increased but are still low compared to commercial venues. More weddings were held in the past 12 months than in any previous year.

The library

Following negotiations Cumberland Council has offered to take back responsibility for the upkeep of the library building and for paying the library staff. They will maintain the library service to the same standard as all the other libraries they manage across the region. This will save the town council some £70,000 to £80,000 a year on running costs alone, and end the situation whereby Cockermouth residents – uniquely in Cumberland – were paying twice for library services – once to Cumberland Council and again through the precept

levied by the town council, an arrangement which has cost Cockermouth residents several hundred thousand pounds over the past seven years.

Cumberland will be able to repair the library roof, replace the aging, inefficient heating system and fixing the leaking sash windows. This will help to preserve the books themselves as well as improving the experience of library users. It will also ensure that library staff are entitled to the same pay, conditions and opportunities for advancement as their counterparts elsewhere in Cumberland.

The bus service

The town bus service is also the subject of renegotiation with Cumberland Council. The five-year subsidy from Story Homes came to end in February this year, right in the middle of Cumberland Council's public consultation about bus services across the region. Discussions have been held with officers of Cumberland Council and we are hopeful that a service funded largely by the unitary authority will be agreed in the near future.

Council Events

We have introduced a system of meetings of councillors and staff to plan and review events, meaning that ideas for changes and improvements can be discussed beforehand and that after an event we can sit down and consider what worked well and what did not.

The council ran its usual calendar of events during the year:

- The Midsummer Fun Day on Memorial Gardens took place in June in torrential rain. We had organised a mayor's raffle with some excellent prizes donated by local shops and businesses, but thanks to the weather the takings were less than the value of the prizes! The dog show was a great success despite the weather. I had to act as judge, and patting the dogs' squelchy heads was at least one way of keeping my hands warm.
- The fireworks event in early November was, by contrast, blessed with glorious weather. People in the nearby flats were watching from their balconies sipping glasses of wine.
- The Remembrance Day commemorations took place in St Joseph's church and at the war memorial. As mayor it was my duty to read out the long list of townspeople who died in the two world wars. That will stay with me. It was particularly poignant to read out the names of several members of the same family; perhaps a father who was killed in the First World War, and his son in the second.
- The Christmas lights switch-on event – which actually takes place in mid-November – was also highly successful. Again the weather was kind. As ever the Grinch stole the show.

- The mayors' annual charity golf competition took place in April and was a great success. Entries were up on last year and the raffle was very popular.

A Community-Led Plan

The town council has engaged on a process to produce a community-led town plan. This has involved public meetings to form a steering committee whose role will be to consult as widely as possible. The plan, when finished, will offer a vision of what the town can be in years to come – a vision which will have the backing of all sections of the community and which planners will need to consider.

The High Street Task Force

As mayor I have attended several High Street Task Force workshops and meetings led by the Chamber of Trade and Cumberland Council. The aim is to coordinate efforts to improve the town centre as a place to socialise, shop and take part in activities. High streets across the country are changing as society changes, and it is important to keep up and ensure that our town centre offers what people want. We hope to support an increasing range of formal and informal events to engage people and bring them into the town centre.

Improvements to Green Open Spaces

We have continued our programme of improvements to our green open spaces by agreeing to the planting of native flowering trees and shrubs around the margins at the Towers Lane recreation area and by leaving unmown edges at both Towers Lane and Harris Park extension. These actions help insects, birds and small mammals to thrive; and improve soil health, store carbon and reduce flooding by holding water on the land. And perhaps most of all, as many recent reports and studies have shown, access to nature is extremely important for people's mental and physical well-being.

Some of the barriers on the Greenway have been removed to improve access for mobility scooters, wheelchairs and buggies. More will hopefully be removed in future years.

We are now moving on to consider improvements to the council's open spaces at Greyrigg Avenue and Isel Road and to the footpaths across our open spaces. We have a plan to invite people to sponsor memorial benches and trees in these areas. And we would be keen to hear any further suggestions you have to enhance our open areas for people and wildlife..

Engagement with the Public and other Stakeholders

We have made improvements to our public participation procedure by allowing members of the public to speak on any item on the agenda of a town council meeting without prior notice. We are engaging more collaboratively with the Chamber of Trade, the Civic Trust and other local bodies. And we are seeking to encourage greater attendance at public meetings such as this one.

There is more to do, however, and a town centre notice board and regular e-newsletter are among other measures which are planned to make people more aware of what the town council does and to help them to feel involved.

Climate Emergency Working Group

A climate emergency working group has been set up to meet regularly. Any councillor may attend and put forward suggestions to improve the local environment.

Twinning Working Group

A working group has also been set up to oversee our twinning arrangements with Marvejols. Two town councillors, including the deputy mayor, were among a group which visited Marvejols last October, and earlier this month a large group of singers and musicians from Marvejols made a very successful visit to Cockermouth. Another group will be visiting in October.

Final words

I have enjoyed my year as mayor more than perhaps I thought I would. I'm not a natural wearer of gold chains, and the role of local dignitary makes me feel instinctively uncomfortable. As ever, the answer to such anxieties is just to be yourself and not take it too seriously except, of course, when you have to.

As mayor you get invited to a great many events from formal dinners and concerts to less-formal gatherings of various kinds. I've already mentioned reading out the names of those who died in the two world wars. Other occasions that stick in my mind include giving out Duke of Edinburgh Award certificates to pupils at Mayfield school; attending a fete organised by children on the Parklands estate to raise money for UNICEF; and visiting the stalls during the charities' weekend and finding out about the excellent work being done by a whole host of local organisations whose existence I hadn't even been aware of in some cases. Those included Andy's Man Club and T'Gether who we will be hearing from after the interval.

The mayor gets to nominate one or more charities which the council then helps to raise money for during the year. I chose the Cockermouth Junior Football Club and the West Lakes Squirrel Initiative, and with support from all councillors we have raised over £1,500 during the year. This will be divided equally between the two charities.

I'd like to take this opportunity thank my fellow town councillors, our two Cumberland councillors Andrew Semple and Helen Tucker, the town clerk, Jane Ollerenshaw and her staff for all their work on behalf of the community throughout the year.

In my acceptance speech as newly-elected mayor in May last year I spoke of five priorities: community, the town centre, our green open spaces, accountability, and sustainability; and I said that everything we do in the coming year and beyond will be linked to one or more of

Appendix A

those priorities. I believe we have made a good start. And working together with all of you here today and with the community at large I believe we can continue to modernise and make improvements to the way the town council works, the services it provides and how it engages with the community it serves.

Thank you.

Richard Watson April 2025

Cumberland Councillors' report to Cockermouth Annual Town Meeting, April 2025

Our report reflects Cumberland Council's continuing commitment to our Community Panel's priorities - community health and well-being, community involvement and community resilience.

Two members were co-opted onto the Community Panel in June 2024 – Ms Janet Farebrother and Ms Sarah Williams.

Since the last annual meeting, the Lakes to Sea Community Panel has supported these projects which benefit our town:

Cockermouth Parkrun

Cockermouth Parkrun received £4,800. The aim of this project is to promote community participation in health recreation by organising running/walking events and creating opportunities for community members to become involved in these activities as participants and/or volunteers. This funding represents 50% of the total funding needed. This application met the panel's priorities of community involvement, community health and wellbeing, and community resilience, and will promote community participation in healthy recreation.

1st Cockermouth Scout Group

The Scout group received £2,800 to purchase climbing equipment. This project supports the Council's priority to improve health and wellbeing of residents, and the panel's priorities of community health and wellbeing, community involvement and community resilience.

Kirkgate Arts and Heritage

Kirkgate Arts and Heritage received funding to purchase a portable PA system (£4,276). This system will better facilitate the activities held at the arts centre and those of rural touring venues. The system will also be available to members of the public to hire for their own events (thus potentially providing a useful additional income stream).

Riversmeet Community Co-operative

Riversmeet Community Co-operative were awarded £2,304 to purchase a polytunnel. Riversmeet Community Co-operative aim to support the community in tackling issues around sustainability, and to contribute to the wellbeing and reliance of the local

community. This application met the priorities of community health and wellbeing, community involvement and community resilience.

Happy Mums Foundation

The Happy Mums Foundation were awarded £975 towards funding for a pilot scheme for mums and mums-to-be in Cockermouth, around managing their mental health. This application met the priorities for community health and wellbeing, and community involvement.

Appendix B

Kings Church

Kings Church were awarded £803 towards equipment to set up a parent and toddler group in Cockermouth. The group is open to all. This application met the priorities for community involvement, and community health and wellbeing.

Cockermouth Mechanics Band

Cockermouth Mechanics Band received £1,000 towards a project celebrating their bicentenary, a project to compose a piece of music that the musicians/band will own. This application met the priorities for community health and wellbeing, and community involvement.

Cockermouth Festivals Group

Cockermouth Festivals Group were awarded £1,056 towards costs of purchasing reusable flag promoting Cockermouth Live events. This application met the priorities for community involvement and community health and wellbeing.

Active Travel Network Event

This event took place on 17 January 2025, at Cockermouth Rugby Club. The event explored the panel's priority of Community Resilience. The report will be publicised once published.

Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council have launched a new website to encourage people to walk, wheel, or cycle for regular journeys instead of driving. The **Travel Actively Cumbria** website was formally launched in April - the website has information on travelling actively for everyday journeys in Cumbria. It includes a journey planner, information on how to get started with active travel, and news and events. To explore the website, please visit www.travelactively.co.uk

Further information about the Lakes to sea Community Panel can be found here: **Lakes to Sea Community Panel | Cumberland Council**

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Cockermouth Town Council Meeting – 23/04/25

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Mayor of Cockermouth, Richard Watson and the Town Council for inviting me here tonight. I've known Richard ever since I ran to be elected as your Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner last year, the work of the Town Council and all of you in your as individual councillors is something that I really support, especially since the creation of our two Unitary Authorities in Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. Town Councils have acted as effective councils with their ears close to the ground representing residents well and improving the town that they live in and serve.

Before I start, I wanted to recognise the ^{fact} ~~fact~~ that you all play and to state that I am really glad to be here and update you on the work that I am doing as your Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Since being elected, I've worked to be a visible and accessible Commissioner responding to residents' concerns and hearing and listening to their views on what they want from their Police and Fire Service.

Visible Policing:

Whilst running for election and while later writing my Police, Fire and Crime Plan which sets out the strategic objectives that me and my office will set for the Police and Fire Services, I heard loudly and clearly what residents wanted from their Police Force:

They wanted to see the Police more in their communities, they wanted a named visible officer that they knew and trusted. I know this works, for those of you that don't know I started my career as a Police Officer all the way back in 1986 as the local neighbourhood bobby for Burgh by Sands. I'm pleased to say that we're making great strides in this area. Just a fortnight ago, we secured £1.68 million which is ringfenced entirely for neighbourhood policing.

Appendix C

This will see an increase of 46 Police Staff into Cumbria Constabulary and will enable us to recruit an additional 26 Police Officers, 12 PCSOs and 8 Special Constables. If I have one ask to all of you today, it is to say, please spread this message far and wide! If you have family or friends who may be interested in a career of public service, then please mention that Cumbria Constabulary is hiring!

Whilst speaking about neighbourhood policing, I thought that now would be a good time to give you the figures regarding crime in the community, I am of course happy to take questions at the end about any of the following:

Period provided: 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025

Cockermouth Only (U11)

Acquisitive Crime: decreased by -30.9% from 68 to 47, a decrease of -21. (Vehicle offences (-6), Theft (-16), Robbery (0), Burglary (0)) There were no increases in any of the acquisitive crime categories, Robbery and Burglary offences remained stable when compared with the previous year.

All Crime: decreased by -12.5% from 392 to 343, a decrease of -49 crimes for the period. (despite the decrease the following crime categories increased, drugs (+2), Possession of weapons (+2), Robbery (+1), Sexual offences (+5) 31/03/2025. **Youth Crime:** decreased by -7.14 from 42 to 39, a decrease -3 crimes

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): ASB decreased by -23.1% from 39 to 30, a decrease of -9. (Environmental ()), Nuisance (-6), Personal (-3)

There are some really good figures here seeing that anti-social behaviour has reduced which blights so many residents' lives. We have much more to do though, and I am not complacent whatsoever.

Op Enhance - Hotspot Policing

As part of this work to reduce anti-social behaviour, I also wanted to update you on the work of Op Enhance. Op Enhance is all about getting officers out in our hotspot areas to deter ASB and serious violence and the results really speak for themselves.

Appendix C

The results of that visibility and the increased patrols speak for themselves.

The 18 hotspot areas in Cumbria covered only 0.04 per cent of our county but accounted for 23.1 per cent of all ASB. We have successfully driven those rates of ASB across our county in some areas by over two thirds.

This work was made possible because of successful lobbying with the government, being awarded £1 million of funding to increase patrols in our hotspot areas.

Tackling Drugs:

We have also made some great strides in tackling drugs across Communities. Some of you may have seen on ITV Border recently that work first-hand. I have taken the decision to fund a number of 'days of action' which have targeted drug dealers across Cumbria. This essentially brings various Police Officers and different units together to take out dealers and the ruinous drugs they are dealing in our communities. Whilst Cockermouth was not one of these locations that was targeted, I wanted you to know about the wider work that we have been doing on your behalf. As part of this work, we have seized thousands of pounds, seized many harmful drugs and made over 25 arrests in total so far as a result of those three dedicated days.

The money that funds these operations comes from the Drugs Fund. This is money that is seized from drug dealers and used to tackle more drug dealers. I think there's a delicious irony in that and a great use of money.

National Issues:

As part of my wider work, I also campaign on a number of national issues, one of these campaigns that is close to my heart and that I am investing time and energy in, is the work of the Graduated Driver's Licensing campaign. This is essentially about making our roads safer for our young people.

I encountered this campaign from meeting with an inspirational campaigner in Sharron Huddleston who lost her daughter Caitlin in a road accident when she was just 18.

Appendix C

The scheme could put restrictions on young, newly qualified drivers to prevent them from carrying peer-aged passengers until they have been driving for at least six months.

It could also include driving curfews, speed limits, mandatory 'P' plates, and limits on car engine sizes.

Passing your driver's test as a seventeen-year-old is an incredibly exciting rite of passage. It's also, in our rural county, something that is a necessity. However, getting behind the wheel of a car without an experienced driver is a massive responsibility.

Earlier this year, I wrote to all 5 of Cumbria's MPs to ask them to support the campaign – I was delighted that they agreed and we subsequently wrote to the Transport Secretary. We are now trying to mobilise as many Police and Crime Commissioners as possible into supporting the campaign.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service:

My role is not just about policing, I am also the Fire Commissioner for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. We have just undergone a recent inspection which will be made public in the coming weeks and will hopefully reveal the positive steps we have taken since the last review in 2023.

Upon entering office, the Service was on a poor financial footing. I am glad to say that we have stabilised that and the Service will continue to provide an effective service for residents should they need it.

We have also made significant investments into the service, buying new turntable ladders for two stations at Carlisle East and Barrow. These will provide a safe system of work for Firefighters to respond to and resolve incidents at height and also provide a water bowser for major building fires.

They should not be underestimated as they cost in the region of £700,000 each - a lot of money! – but a necessary piece of equipment.

We have also made significant improvements to a number of our fire stations making them the best possible place for our firefighters to work

Appendix C

and train in. This was necessary as a number of these fire stations were either ageing or in need of modernisation.

Closing remarks:

Concluding tonight: I wanted to again express my thanks for inviting me here today.

I wanted to leave you with a couple of thoughts and asks before opening up for any questions.

Please do keep on reporting crime and anti-social behaviour. It is only by the Police having the intelligence to act that we can resolve these issues.

Please do get in touch with me if you have anything that you would like to see more of or any ideas that you may have in which I can help with. I'm really keen that I hear from Town Councillors to hear directly the thoughts, ideas and concerns that many of you have.

And lastly, please do share the good news that we have had recently regarding neighbourhood policing. We're making the Police more visible in communities again just like I promised we would but we can only do that with your support.

Thank you.

**COCKERMOUTH AND PAPCASTLE
RECREATIONAL CHARITY**

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR

2024-25

Registered Charity Number 1040902

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHARITY 2024-25

A. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL

A.1 The Cockermouth and Papcastle Recreational Charity is governed by a scheme sealed by the Charity Commission on 8th August 1994, with Registration Number 1040902.

A.2 There are eight trustees, currently

Mr Alan Smith (Chair)	nominated by Cockermouth Town Council
Mr Robert Jackson	nominated by Papcastle Parish Council
Mr Brian Merris	nominated by Papcastle Parish Council
Mrs Isabel Burns	nominated by Cockermouth Town Council
Mrs Christine Smith	nominated by Cockermouth Town Council
Mr. Alan Kennon	nominated by Cockermouth Town Council
Mr. John Conlon	co-opted
Mrs Ros Earthy	co-opted

Vacancies in the number of trustees are filled by the nominating bodies (Cockermouth Town Council – four, Papcastle Parish Council – two) with two individuals co-opted.

A.3 The administration of the Charity:

Secretary: : Mrs Sheila Brown, Woodside Lodge, Camerton, Workington, Cumbria CA14 1LY

Bank: Cumberland Building Society, Station Street, Cockermouth

A.4 The Charity does not operate any committees.

A.5 For the purposes of the charity scheme, the area of benefit is the Parishes of Cockermouth and Papcastle.

B. THE PURPOSES AND WORKING OF THE CHARITY

The objectives of the Charity are to facilitate the provision for recreation or other leisure-time occupation for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area of benefit so as to improve the conditions of life for them.

C. THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

C.1 CHAIRMANSHIP

The Chair is Mr Alan Smith

C.2 FINANCES

The increase in market's volatility in 2024/25 has continued.

C.3 GRANTS FINANCED

- a) The charity normally meets just twice a year, in May and October. Applications are invited through public notice and/or invitation.
- b) In the year under review, [6th April 2024 to 5th April 2025, the charity made 9 grants ranging from £150 to £700 as follows:-

INSERT ALL GRANTS

Papcastle Social Committee	Halloween Party	£150
Papcastle Social Committee	Family Fun Day	£150
Papcastle Village Hall	Newsletter	£700
Cockermouth RUFC	Floodlighting	£400
1 st Cockermouth Scouts	Energy Efficiency	£300
Cockermouth Live 2025	Festival	£300
Cockermouth Titans	Equipment	£200
Deer Orchard Football Club	Changing Rooms	£300
Osprey Cheerleading	Workshops	£300

Total - £ 2,800

C.3 SUMMARY OF RECENT GRANT PROVISION

Year of activity	No of grants	Value £
2005-6	8	2,150
2006-7	11	4,085
2007-8	10	3,500
2008-9	10	3,045
2009-10	5	1,850
2010-11	7	3,000
2011-12	7	1,300
2012-13	9	2,970
2013-14	4	1,900
2014-15	11	4,050
2015-16	8	3,308
2016-17	15	2,920
2017-18	12	3,033
2018-19	10	2,935
2019-20	9	2,880
2020-21	0	0
2021-22	9	4,344
2022-23	10	3,825
2023-24	11	3,620
2024/25	9	2,800
Total	175	57,515

Notes

Appendix D

- (1) The accumulated balance at the year-end is available for the award of grants later during the month of April.
- (2) Average value per grant (last five year) £374.07
- (3) Since its inception in 1994, the charity has made 277 grants to the value of £89,494

C.5 ADMINISTRATION

The Secretary is Mrs Sheila Brown.

Considered and approved by the Charity Trustees and signed for them

.....

Date

Appendix E

Hello, my name is Tom Speight and I currently chair the planning committee for CL.

Cockermouth Live is a not for profit, completely volunteer run registered charity. And it is about:

- Having fun, supporting local performers, supporting our town, ambition, and brilliant performances as well

Last year, the town council's support contributed to helping us make the festival one of the best ever

– and this is what it looked like: RUN VT

Did you attend ? (HANDS UP) To recap on those stats:

- 4,100 people, 62 shows, involving 475 performers, 18 venues, 3 days, 26 volunteers altogether, with 7 of us who meet throughout the year to make it all happen.

Our budget for last year was approx. £18,000. The Town Council gave us £500 towards the costs of it.

Main costs were:

- Paying for some artists (some income covers their fees but we try to get in different artists.....Blazin Fiddles last year cost us over £4,000)
- Marquee and toilet hire
- Venue hire
- PRS or music copyright services
- Publicity, branding and programme printing (all programmes were given out free)
- We bought some new banners last year at a cost of just over £1k

We used the Town Council money to do three things:

- Help fund a young musicians showcase for 3 young musicians who had not played in front of big audiences before – at the Castle
- Contribute to the cost of a whole new set of graphics and branding for CL
- Contribute towards the cost of 8 new 6 foot high feather banners which billow in the wind

This year, the 16th Cockermouth Live, we are in rude health. We have plans for more street entertainment, we have booked some fabulous live music for the Kirkgate (N'famady Kouyaté from Guinea, Stax of Soul, a nine piece soul band, the jazz group Oppgaard, as well as two spoken word artists, Emma McGordon and Steph Bradshaw), and we have use of the Castle again for the weekend as well as over 20 venues and the streets too ! The Mechanics and the Community Orchestra will again be performing...

We have recruited three new members of our planning committee including Chris sat here....

We will continue with our expanded three days (we started to use Sunday fully three years ago) and also add extra events on the Thursday evening at the Kirkgate too. CHRIS BILLING

We will continue to make Cockermouth Live one of the best weekends of the year for our town, for all its citizens, shopkeepers and businesses as well as visitors and folk from surrounding villages.

We need financial help to make all of this happen – and we will be applying for your support once again, along with local businesses, funders, benefactors and asking for contributions on the day as ever too (last year, we collected over £2,500 over the weekend).

Thank you.