

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the council chamber,
Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes
Councillor Catherine Bell
Councillor Chris Bridgman
Councillor Jim Samson
Councillor Gillian Telford

Councillor Howard Beanland
Councillor Marion Bowman
Councillor Julie Laidlow
Councillor Alan Smith
Councillor Richard Watson (Mayor)

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Clerk

Members of the public: Two

19:00 Meeting opened.

325/24 Apologies. Apologies received from Cllrs Burns and Malloy.

326/24 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 19th March 2025. Resolved to approve the minutes as a correct record.

327/24 Declarations of interest None

328/24 Exclusion of Press and Public. Resolved to exclude the press and public under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act (1960) from the following items:

17 – due to confidentiality

25 & 26 – due to data protection for members of the public

27 – due to staffing matters being discussed.

329/24 Mayor's Announcements. The Mayor had attended an art exhibition at Mayfield school. There was a concert by the Cockermouth Harmonics Choir and an open evening at the Kirkgate. The Mayor's golf competition had gone very well and the raffle was well received. Then this week he has met with a group of visitors from Marvejols.

330/24 Reports from Cumberland Councillors. The Cumberland councillors were not in attendance. Cllr Laidlow said that she had been approached by the owner of The Old Court House as he wanted a public meeting. It was **resolved** that as this was not a Town Council matter, that the Clerk would write to Cllr Semple to ask if Cumberland Council could facilitate this.

331/24 Public participation. No questions or petitions had been received.

332/24 Planning

- **HOU/2025/0051 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **LBC/2025/0008 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **HOU/2025/0056 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **HOU/2025/0049 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **HOU/2025/0061 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **HOU/2025/0060 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **FUL/2025/0051 Resolved** to recommend approval on the plans that were published, but to point out that a comment on the plans could be taken to mean that these were not the final plans. The Council could not comment on any plans that it has not seen.
- **HOU/2025/0052 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **HOU/2025/0073 Resolved** to recommend approval
- **HOU/2025/0067 Resolved** to recommend approval

333/24 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. Resolved to note the schedule as received.

334/24 Climate Emergency Group. Cllr Barnes said that he and Cllr Beanland would arrange a site visit to look at the areas of Greyrigg and Isel Road prior to a group meeting in May.

335/24 Community Led Plan. Cllr Bridgman said that the meeting on 24th March had been well attended. The next meeting would include Act Cumbria which would be on 12th May.

336/24 Complaints Procedure. Resolved To defer to the next meeting. Councillors to submit their recommendations to the Clerk, who would re-draft the policy. Cllr Beanland suggested that the policy and procedure were produced as separate documents.

337/24 Replacement Curtains. Resolved to approve the purchase.

338/24 Asset Policy. The Clerk suggested that the second point 3, on the second page of the draft policy should be removed. **Resolved** to approve the policy with the suggested amendment.

339/24 Reserves Policy. Resolved. To adopt the policy.

340/24 Twinning Committee Terms of Reference. It was agreed for continuity that the committee appointments would be for the term of the Council. Cllr Laidlow said that she would be interested to join the committee, but could only attend daytime meetings if they were held on a Wednesday. It was agreed that the number of

councillors would be changed to five. The Chair would be appointed by the Council. **Resolved** to approve the terms of reference as amended.

341/24 Finance Committee. Cllr Smith proposed that a Finance Committee be formed at the Annual Council meeting, which would prepare the budget for Council approval. It should consist of 2 Labour, 1 Lib-Dem, and 2 Independent members. Cllr Beanland said that the budget process was now more transparent, councillors had three meetings at which they could suggest amendments, and had the benefit of a spreadsheet which they could use as a working document to trial amendments. He suggested a Council meeting with a single agenda item to discuss the budget could be held between the November and January meetings instead. He did not consider that a committee was necessary. Cllrs discussed the current and historic budget setting process. The motion was put to the vote and lost.

342/24 Memorial Bench and Tree policy. Resolved that Cllr Beanland would arrange a working group of councillors to draft a policy to be brought back to the Council for approval.

343/24 Payments for approval. Resolved to approve the payments.

344/24 Pre-approved payments. Resolved to note the schedule of payments.

345/24 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- The emergency lighting needed to be replaced, and due to the urgency on health and safety grounds, she would instruct the electrician to proceed on the quotation received which was £1510. The Council agreed that this should go ahead.

346/24 Councillor Matters.

- Cllr Telford had noticed that an ATM had appeared on Station Street at the Premier Store. The Clerk would contact Cumberland planning.
- Cllr Bowman said that the ramp leading to the toilets in Harris park was overgrown with moss. The Clerk would make enquiries about getting it cleaned.

Members of the public left the meeting – Confidential session

347/24 Anti-vandalism Main Street Toilets. Cllr Beanland and the Clerk would make further investigations into the costs and practicality of option three in the confidential document.

348/24 Allotment Complaint. Cllr Malloy had updated the Clerk. He had spoken to the allotment holder who was going to try to resolve her problem with her neighbour.

349/24 Allotment update. Cllr Barnes had spoken to the allotment holder and they had drawn up a plan. He had concerns over access to the plot. He would continue to follow through with this and it would take some time to hopefully see some improvement. Cllr Barnes was thanked and asked to continue the good work.

350/24 Response to two letters. Resolved that the response recommended by the Staffing Committee is approved.

Date of next meeting. Confirmed as Wednesday 21st May 2025.

21.02 Meeting closed.