

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Cockermouth, on Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes

Councillor Catherine Bell

Councillor Isabel Burns

Councillor David Malloy (Mayor)

Councillor Alan Smith

Councillor Richard Watson

Councillor Howard Beanland

Councillor Marion Bowman

Councillor Julie Laidlow

Councillor James Samson

Councillor Gillian Telford

Cumberland Councillor Andrew Semple

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Town Clerk

Mrs Amy Jeffrey – Assistant Town Clerk

Members of the Public: 8

19:00 meeting opened.

223/25 Apologies. None received.

224/25 To approve the minutes of the Cockermouth Town Council Meeting of 17th December 2025, the minutes of the final Staffing Committee of 1st December and the minutes of the Special Planning meeting of 12th January. Resolved to approve the minutes.

225/25 To receive the minutes of the Staffing Committee Meeting of 1st October 2025. Resolved to note received.

226/25 Declaration of interests.

Cllr Telford declared an interest in WTPO/2026/0003, as she is a neighbour of the applicant.

227/25 Exclusion of Press & Public. No matters required the exclusion of the press and public.

228/25 Mayor's Announcements.

Cllr Malloy reported attending the Probus Club Christmas Lunch and the Christmas Carols around the Tree. He thanked those who attended.

229/25 Reports from Cumberland Councillors.

- **Bus Service.** Cllr Semple reported that usage of the C123 bus service is approximately 77 passengers per day. He advised that there have been issues with the printed timetables, however, updated timetables are expected to be issued next month including displays at the bus stops.

- **Greenway Lighting.** Cllr Semple advised that he has spoken with the Highways Director and confirmed that the installation of lighting on the Greenway will proceed.
- **Dale View Steps.** Cllr Semple confirmed that the Dale View steps have not been adopted by Cumberland Council. He explained that adoption cannot take place until the steps are brought up to the required standard, as adoption in their current condition would present a liability. Efforts will be made to secure funding to progress this further.
- **Budget Consultation.** Cllr Semple informed members that the Cumberland Council website contains detailed information explaining the need to increase Council Tax by the maximum permitted amount of 4.9%. He encouraged residents to review the information and take part in the consultation.
- **Tour de France.** Cllr Semple confirmed that Stage 1 of the Tour de France will finish in Carlisle and Stage 2 will start the following day in Keswick. He advised that approximately 7,000 volunteers will be required and noted that he will discuss the matter in the near future.

Cllr Laidlow thanked Cllr Semple for his informative report and raised concerns regarding the bus service not adhering to the allocated timetable, noting that buses have been departing earlier than scheduled. Cllr Telford expressed concerns about a recent road incident on the Level, highlighting that this was not the first occurrence. Cllr Barnes also raised an issue relating to the positioning of bus stops in line with advertised locations.

The Clerk confirmed Cllr Tucker had sent her apologies and would circulate a report.

230/25 Guest Speakers. None present.

231/25 Public Participation. A member of the public commented on the Mayoral Chain and suggested that, rather than removing the oldest links first, duplicate links be removed and alternative ways of recognising repeated honours be considered. He also expressed concern about the use of taxpayers' money for this purpose.

Another member of the public raised concerns about the condition of the public footpath from Double Mills Bridge to the Greenway and suggested that the Council allocate funding to improve the path.

232/25 Planning

- **WTPO/2026/0003 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **LBC/2026/0006 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **FUL/2025/0205 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **FUL/2025/0174 Resolved** to recommend approval.

233/25 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. None received.

234/25 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- **Job Vacancy.** Over 70 application packs have been issued, with 20

completed applications returned to date. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview during the week commencing 2 February.

- **Tree Works.** The tree survey conducted in the Memorial Gardens identified a number of trees requiring attention. The Clerk recommended appointing Nicol Landscapes, who carried out the survey, to undertake the necessary works. In addition, a tree at St Helen's Allotments requires removing due to the risk of it falling onto a greenhouse and a second tree requires remedial works. For these works, the Clerk recommended Arborscape. Both projects have been included within this year's anticipated year-end figures.
- **King's Garden Party.** The Council has been invited to nominate up to two individuals, each with a guest, to attend the King's Garden Party. Nominations must be submitted to the Clerk within the next two weeks. The theme for this year's event is diversity.
- **Kirkgate Signage.** Cllr Tucker has continued to pursue this matter and Cumberland Highways are now reviewing and reconsidering the signage.
- **Noticeboard.** In relation to budgeting, the Clerk recommended allowing approximately £3,000 for the provision of a new noticeboard, including delivery and installation costs.
- **Fairfield View Footpath.** Patching works have been completed to repair the footpath.

235/25 Climate Emergency Group. A report was presented to the Council.

- **Isel Road.** Cllr Barnes asked whether the Council could agree to a maximum expenditure of £1,500 for an Ecological Survey. Following completion of the survey, consideration would be given to the removal of the swings and their replacement with natural play structures and picnic tables. **Resolved** the Ecological Survey proceed.
- **Low Road.** It was suggested that the Council seek to increase the number of trees planted and that the storage area be screened with suitable hedging, as it is currently an eyesore.
- **Greyrigg.** Following a survey carried out by Cllr Bridgman, it was suggested that the Council agree to the realignment of the path and the planting of trees, subject to advice from a specialist.
- **Future Goals.** Cllr Barnes stated that the objectives for the coming year would include reducing the environmental impact of Council-owned infrastructure and suppliers, providing support to other environmental organisations and improving cycling and walking routes around the town.

236/25 Community Led Plan. There was no further update.

237/25 Grant request from Grassmoor Mission Community for inclusion in the 2025/2026 budget. **Resolved** to approve a grant of £500.

238/25 Ground Maintenance Contracts. The Clerk returned to both Contractors to request revised quotations and Environmental Impact Statements, which were reported to the Council. **Resolved** that the Contract be awarded to Arborscape.

239/25 Mayoral Chain of Office. Cllr Laidlow highlighted the historical importance of the Mayoral Chain and suggested a small annual budget for engraving and maintenance costs. Cllr Burns proposed removing duplicate names to create space. Cllr Malloy supported this approach and suggested using a local company.

Resolved that the chain be reviewed for duplicate names and a revised quotation obtained.

240/25 Harris Park Extension footpath improvements. Cllr Beanland outlined the proposed footpath improvements and associated costs for inclusion in the 2026/2027 budget. **Resolved** that the proposed expenditure be included in the budget.

241/25 Budget 2026/2027. The Clerk outlined the amendments to the previous draft budget. **Resolved** that the budget be approved.

242/25 Precept 2026/2027. **Resolved** to agree a precept of £332,497.00.

243/25 Payments for Approval. **Resolved** to approve the payments.

244/25 Pre-approved Payments. **Resolved** to note the schedule of payments.

245/25 Councillor Matters.

No matters were discussed.

246/25 Date of next meeting.

Confirmed as Wednesday 18th February 2026.

21:02 meeting closed.