

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Cockermouth, on Wednesday 18th February 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes
Councillor Catherine Bell
Councillor Chris Bridgman
Councillor Julie Laidlow
Councillor James Samson
Councillor Gillian Telford

Councillor Howard Beanland
Councillor Marion Bowman
Councillor Isabel Burns
Councillor David Malloy (Mayor)
Councillor Alan Smith
Councillor Richard Watson

Cllr Andrew Semple – Cumberland Councillor
Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Town Clerk
Mrs Amy Jeffrey – Assistant Town Clerk
Members of the Public: 7

19:00 meeting opened.

247/25 Apologies. None received.

248/25 To approve the minutes of the Cockermouth Town Council Meeting of 21st January 2026. Resolved to approve the minutes.

249/25 Declaration of interests.

Cllr Bridgman and Cllr Watson each declared an interest in agenda item 18, as both are members of Cockermouth CAN. Cllr Malloy declared a personal interest in planning application FUL/2024/0192.

250/25 Exclusion of Press & Public. No matters required the exclusion of the press and public.

251/25 Mayor's Announcements.

Cllr Malloy reported that he had attended the Rotary Charter Night.

252/25 Reports from Cumberland Councillors.

- **Cockermouth Library.** Cllr Semple reported that Cockermouth Library is one of the two most popular libraries in Cumberland by footfall. He advised that work is ongoing to develop the library service and expressed a wish to involve the Town Council in that process.
- **Dale View Steps.** Cllr Semple reiterated that the steps had not been adopted by Cumberland. He advised that he was seeking to pursue adoption of the steps, but this was proving difficult due to their poor condition and lack of accessibility. A suggestion was made to create a winding path to the right of the existing footpath to provide improved accessibility and Cllr Semple welcomed further suggestions from the Town Council.

- **Greenway.** Cllr Semple suggested that he could write to the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) seeking their assistance with creating a path onto the Greenway, including the Town Council's support in the correspondence. Cllr Smith proposed involving Community Payback to help with labour costs.

Cllr Laidlow informed Cllr Semple that she had contacted Cumberland Council shortly after 9:00am and requested a call back but did not receive one. Cllr Semple said he would investigate the call back waiting times.

253/25 Guest Speakers. None present.

254/25 Public Participation. A member of the public asked the Town Council to consider requesting that Cumberland Council allow pensioners free access to buses outside the current times, for example before 9:30am, on routes running with spare capacity. He acknowledged that this might not be possible under current rules but noted that the proposal would cost little or nothing and could bring significant benefits. The Clerk confirmed she would forward the enquiry directly to Cllr Semple.

A further member of the public thanked the Town Council for the grant awarded at a previous meeting and reported that the funding had already been used to support the commencement of training sessions. She also advised that she is a member of the steering group for the Community Led Plan and expressed thanks to the Clerk for assistance with the Facebook page and the Town Council website.

255/25 Planning

- **LBC/2026/0008 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **FUL/2026/0009 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **LBC/2026/0001 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **CAT/2026/0002 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **HOU/2026/0015 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **CAT/2026/0005 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **ADV/2026/0001 Resolved** to recommend refusal on the following material planning grounds - harm to amenity, including the impact on vulnerable residents of a neighbouring care home, contrary to Policy DM11 of the Allerdale Local Plan. Excessive scale, illumination and visual prominence, resulting in an intrusive and overbearing feature within the street scene and failure to demonstrate appropriate mitigation or design alternatives to reduce the identified amenity impacts.
- **FUL/2024/0192 Resolved** to recommend refusal of this application, as the additional documents submitted have not addressed the concerns raised in the Council's previous objection. The proposal remains unacceptable in terms of the type of housing, design, layout and location. At the request of Cllr Beanland there was a recorded vote. In favour: Cllrs Barnes, Beanland, Bell, Bowman, Bridgman, Burns, Samson, Smith, Telford and Watson. Abstention: Cllrs Laidlow and Malloy.

256/25 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. None received.

257/25 Violet Bank. Cllr Beanland advised that 18 conditions had been attached to the planning permission. Following a recent site visit, he identified several conditions which he considered should be raised with the planning department to establish whether they had been complied with. These included the requirement that, prior to the commencement of development, full details of the surface water drainage system be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. In addition, no development should commence until a biodiversity management and monitoring plan, demonstrating a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Cllr Beanland proposed that the Council write to the planning authority to request confirmation that the above documents have been received and approved. He further suggested seeking confirmation that the design specifications required under Condition 7 have been met, as he had observed lodge designs on site which did not appear to form part of the original approved application, nor could he find any evidence that they had been subsequently approved. **Resolved** that the Clerk write to the planning authority to seek confirmation that the relevant planning conditions have been met and formally discharged.

258/25 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- **Isel Road.** The Clerk confirmed that works to the entrance of Isel Road had been completed and the ivy had been severed at the bottom of the ash tree on the land boundary.
- **Cumberland Supported Housing Strategy Consultation.** The Clerk advised that the deadline for responses is 4th March and encouraged Councillors to submit their individual responses should they wish to do so.
- **Hanging Baskets/Amberols.** The Clerk confirmed that the existing planters will be purchased rather than new ones, as this will cost approximately a quarter of the price of buying new replacements.

259/25 Climate Emergency Group. A report was presented to the Council.

- **EV Charging points.** Cllr Barnes proposed that the Town Council write to Cumberland Council to explore the possibility of installing additional electric vehicle charging points in the town's car parks. He suggested working with Cumberland Council to identify suitable locations and potentially liaising with the Chamber of Trade. Cllr Barnes noted a previous comment from a member of the public, highlighting that future events such as the Tour de France are likely to create a significant increase in demand for charging points. **Resolved** the Clerk write to Cumberland Council regarding the provision of additional EV charging points.
- **Solar Panels.** Cllr Barnes requested that the Clerk investigate the potential financial benefits of installing solar panels on the roof of the Town Hall. **Resolved** the Clerk is tasked with carrying out this investigation.

260/25 Community Led Plan. Cllr Bridgman reiterated that the public visioning day will be held on Saturday 21st March 2026 at the United Reformed Church. He confirmed that a different artist, who they had previously expressed interest in but

was unavailable at the time, will now be involved. Local primary schools will be invited to bring concept artwork illustrating their aspirations for the town.

Cllr Bowman suggested that we refer to the plan as the 'Community Led Town Plan' in future.

261/25 Signage and Displays. Cllr Telford raised concerns regarding the ongoing issue of unsuitable signage on a number of buildings, particularly on Station Street. She suggested that the Town Council write to Cumberland Council to draw the matter to its attention and to remind it of its obligations to ensure that appropriate signage is maintained within the conservation area. **Resolved** that the Clerk write to Cumberland Council's Planning Department to raise these concerns.

262/25 URC Closure. Cllr Telford reported good attendance at the meeting regarding the proposed closure of the United Reformed Church. It was noted that 17 groups use the building regularly and that its loss would be significant. A group was formed to consider the financial viability of the building.

Cllr Smith added that the building did not appear viable due to difficulties obtaining insurance and other structural issues. The option of demolition and rebuilding as a community centre, including alternative locations were discussed.

Cllr Barnes, who also attended, stated that it was evident the building was not considered worth the investment.

263/25 Supported Housing Strategy. It was noted that this item had been addressed previously within the Clerk's Report and therefore was not discussed further.

264/25 Grant request from Cockermouth CAN for inclusion in the 2025/2026 budget. **Resolved** to approve a grant of £233.96.

265/25 Woodland and Scrub Planting. Cllr Watson provided background information on the role of organisations such as Environment Bank, explaining that they purchase units of land for planting and habitat creation to offset development elsewhere, thereby enhancing the landscape and encouraging wildlife. **Resolved** that the Clerk write to express the Council's support for the proposals.

266/25 Mayoral Chain of Office. The item was deferred to the next meeting due to the quotation not being received in time.

267/25 Payments for Approval. **Resolved** to approve the payments.

268/25 Pre-approved Payments. **Resolved** to note the schedule of payments.

269/25 Councillor Matters.

Cllr Telford reported that, with the assistance of residents, progress had been made in getting Lovell and Cumberland to address issues on the upper part of the estate. The area has been marked up, with drainage work scheduled to begin in mid-March, followed by resurfacing of the pavements and roads.

270/25 Date of next meeting.

Confirmed as Wednesday 18th March 2026.

20:48 meeting closed.