

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Cockermouth, on Wednesday 20th May 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
Councillor Alan Smith
Councillor Richard Watson

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Town Clerk
Mrs Amy Jeffrey – Assistant Town Clerk
Miss Jo-Anne Wood – Events and Facilities Support
Members of the Public: 12

The Mayor, Cllr David Malloy, welcomed those present and made a number of presentations prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Cheques for £700 each were presented to Linking Lives and the Europe Prize Scholarship Fund, the Mayor's chosen charities for the year. The Community Champion Award was presented to Cockermouth Mountain Rescue, the Unsung Hero Award to Sean Marsh, and the golf competition award to Max and Lawrence Curwen. The Mayor also gave flowers to staff members, Jane, Amy and Jo-Anne.

19:00 Meeting Opened.

The Mayor thanked those who had supported him during his year.

001/26 Election of Mayor for 2026-2027. Cllr Laidlow was nominated by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Burns. Cllr Telford was nominated by Cllr Bowman, seconded by Cllr Samson. The vote was tie at six-six so Cllr Malloy used his casting vote for Cllr Laidlow. **Resolved** that Cllr Laidlow is elected as Mayor for 2026-2027.

002/26 Election of Deputy Mayor for 2026-2027. Cllr Barnes was nominated by Cllr Laidlow, seconded by Cllr Malloy. Cllr Bridgman was nominated by Cllr Watson, seconded by Cllr Beanland. The vote was tie at six-six so Cllr Laidlow used her casting vote for Cllr Barnes. **Resolved** that Cllr Barnes is elected as Deputy Mayor for 2026-2027.

003/26 Apologies. None received.

004/26 To approve the minutes of the Cockermouth Town Council Meeting of 15th April 2026. **Resolved** to approve the minutes.

005/26 To approve the minutes of the Special Planning Meeting of 28th April 2026. Resolved to approve the minutes subject to the insertion of the following under Minute 323/25 - “Councillor Beanland stated that the development was in the Cockermouth Conservation Area and should be considered in those terms. Councillor Burns stated that it was not. On the understanding that the property was outside of the CCA”.

006/26 Declaration of Interests. There were no Declarations of Interest.

007/26 Exclusion of Press & Public. No items required the exclusion of the Press and Public.

008/26 Reports from Cumberland Councillors.
Apologies were received from Cllr Semple. No written reports were received.

009/26 Guest Speakers. None present.

010/26 Public Participation. No questions had been received.

011/26 Planning

- **CAT/2026/0008 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **ADV/2026/0001 Resolved** to recommend refusal on the same grounds as previously stated in an earlier refusal.

012/26 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. None received.

013/26 Review of items under Standing Order 5J.

v. Delegation Arrangements. Resolved to remain unchanged.

vi. Terms of Reference. Resolved to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Community Led Plan Working Group.

vii. Appointment of Members. Resolved to remain unchanged.

viii. New Committees. None.

ix. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Resolved to adopt the extant Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, subject to the following amendments:

Standing Orders

a) All references to the “Staffing Committee” to be removed and replaced with “Council” to reflect the current structure.

b) Under Standing Order 19(a), the wording “lasting more than one week” to be added to clarify the applicable time period.

c) Under Standing Order 19(f), the following wording to be added:

“A summary of the member of staff’s review and appraisal shall be reported by the Clerk to the Council and accepted by resolution at the next meeting.”

d) Under Standing Orders 14(b), 15(a) and 16(a), the term “nominated staff” to be removed and replaced with “Assistant Town Clerk”, reflecting the introduction of the Assistant Town Clerk role and associated responsibilities in the absence of the Clerk/RFO.

Financial Regulations

e) Under Financial Regulation 4(b), all references to the “Staffing Committee”

to be removed and replaced with “Council” to reflect the current structure.

x. Other Authorities. N/A

xi. Representation on External Bodies. Resolved to remain unchanged.

xiii. Asset Register. This has recently been updated.

xiv. Insurance. The Council remains in a three-year deal. The matter will be brought back to the Council for review at that time.

xv. Subscriptions. Resolved that current subscriptions be maintained.

xvi. Complaints Procedure to remain unchanged.

xvii. FOI & Data Protection Procedures. This is currently under review and will be brought back to the Council for consideration in due course.

xviii. Press & Media Policy. This is currently under review and will be brought back to the Council for consideration in due course.

xix. Employment Policies. All policies have been recently updated.

xx. GPOC/S137 Spending. £25 had been spent on the poppy wreath.

xxi. Date of future meetings. Resolved as:

- Wednesday 17th June 2026
- Wednesday 15th July 2026
- Wednesday 19th August 2026
- Wednesday 16th September 2026
- Wednesday 21st October 2026
- Wednesday 18th November 2026
- Wednesday 16th December 2026
- Wednesday 20th January 2027
- Wednesday 17th February 2027
- Wednesday 17th March 2027
- Wednesday 21st April 2027
- Wednesday 19th May 2027 (Annual Council Meeting)

Cllr Bowman requested that the Annual Town Meeting be organised earlier in future, as this year’s meeting had been arranged at short notice. The Clerk advised that the date could be agreed at the next meeting.

014/26 Staffing Policy. It was proposed that the policy should be amended to reflect the Clerk’s recommendations. **Resolved** that the Staffing Policy, as amended, be adopted,

015/26 Harris Park Extension – Footpath Improvements. Resolved that quotations be sought for the proposed footpath improvements.

016/26 Internal Auditor’s Report. Resolved to approve the Internal Auditor’s Report and to note that there were no recommendations requiring action.

017/26 Annual Governance Statement 2025/26. The Clerk read through the Governance Statements and the answer to each was agreed.

018/26 Annual Accounting Statements 2025/26. Resolved to approve the Accounting Statements.

019/26 Exercise of Public Rights. Resolved to agree the dates 3rd June to 14th

July 2026.

020/26 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2026/27 Financial Year. Resolved that Mrs G Airey be appointed as Internal Auditor.

021/26 Schedule of Regular, Contractual and Recurring Payments. Resolved to approve the schedule as submitted.

022/26 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- **Vandalism.** Both public toilets have been repeatedly vandalised. The police are currently investigating and identifying the culprits. The Clerk will bring a future report regarding a similar CCTV request for Bitterbeck Toilets, as currently installed at Main Street Toilets.
- **Allotments.** Inspections have taken place. Two plot holders have surrendered their plots. All annual rents have been received.
- **Arborscape.** The contractor is currently updating the bin collection schedule in accordance with requirements. The staff are exploring the introduction of QR codes on individual bins to enable reporting of full or damaged bins directly.

023/26 Reports and Requests from Working Groups.

Climate Emergency Group.

- Cllr Barnes reported that the contractor who provided a quotation to survey Isel Road has been invited to attend the next Climate Emergency Group meeting, with a report to be brought back to a future Council meeting.
- Cllr Barnes proposed investigating the cost of re-establishing trees on Station Street prior to approaching Cumberland Council. Cllr Watson advised that the Council's contractor, Arborscape, donates standard trees (one tree per £1,000 of contract value) and suggested this option be considered. Cllr Smith confirmed that a tree specialist has been invited to attend the next meeting to provide advice.

Community Led Plan.

- Cllr Bridgman reported that the Visioning Day and online questionnaire received close to 400 responses, together with approximately 300 responses from the secondary school. These are currently being processed by volunteers. Cllr Bridgman advised that an analysis will be provided in due course and that he hopes to be able to outline plans for the next stage of consultation at a future meeting.

024/26 General Assembly of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize 2026. Councillors discussed attendance. Concerns were raised regarding budget provision and the late notice of the invitation. Councillors acknowledged the prestige of the award and the potential promotional benefits for Cockermouth but agreed that more time would be needed to plan effectively and involve local youth representatives. **Resolved** to send apologies for this year's event, revisit attendance next year and consider inclusion within the next budget.

025/26 Payments for Approval. Resolved to approve the payments.

026/26 Pre-approved Payments. Resolved to note the schedule of payments.

027/26 Councillor Matters.

No matters were raised.

028/26 Date of next meeting.

Confirmed as Wednesday 17th June 2026.

20:23 Meeting Closed.

DRAFT