

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL,
COCKERMOUTH ON TUESDAY 8 MAY 2018 AT 7PM**

Present: Councillor A Tyson (Mayor)
Councillor I Burns
Councillor L Davies
Councillor R Hanson
Councillor A Kennon
Councillor Laidlow
Councillor D Malloy
Councillor S Nicholson
Councillor K Scales
Councillor A Smith

Apologies: Councillors E Nicholson & S Standage

Also Present: J Ellis, Borough Councillor, a press representative and approximately 70 members of the public.

Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 8 May 2017 were signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:-

1. The 3rd paragraph on page 13 should read ' May I wish Rebecca well
2. The 4th paragraph on page 14 should refer to Mr Hully not Councillor Hully.

Annual Report of the Town Council

The Mayor, Alan Tyson presented the Annual Report of the Town Council as follows:-

2017/18 has once again been a very busy year for Cockermouth Town Council. Town Council meetings can now be recorded and filmed and as a result the Town Council has adopted a Protocol which is displayed at the entrance to our meeting room.

The Town Council is consulted by the Borough Council on all planning applications within the town of Cockermouth and in all cases comments have been forwarded to the Borough Council setting out the Town Council's views. The final decision on planning applications does not always agree with the views of the Town Council however the majority of decisions do agree.

Special Planning meetings are now held on the first Thursday of every month if required.

I am pleased to inform you that every square inch of available space in the Town Hall is now leased. The Citizens Advice Bureau continue to hold their outreach sessions each Wednesday in a ground floor office. Allerdale Borough Council enforces usage of our car park on our behalf.

Victoria Hall is currently leased by Mrs Bealt. The Vicky Business Centre opened on 21 February 2018 providing vibrant, flexible and affordable office space for home workers, start-up businesses etc. Flood resilience works were completed and paid for with a flood resilience grant and should help protect the premises from future flooding.

The Tourist Information Centre moved to the library on Main Street on 3 April 2017, along with Allerdale Local Links. The building is managed and staffed by the Town Council. Library services are provided by Cumbria County Council. This arrangement has worked well.

Dates of town council meetings, minutes of meetings etc are available on line at www.ckermouth.org

Our twinning links continue to flourish despite tough economic times. Exchanges to date include:-

Several Marvejolais attending Woolfest

Rotarian exchange to Marvejols

The 34th Anniversary Visit to Marvejols

We are currently planning the 35th Anniversary Visit to Cockermouth

We are currently planning a walking/cycling exchange to Cockermouth this July.

In June 2017 we became a 'sister city to Hebron, New Hampshire. Originally Hebron was part of a larger colonial town named after Lord Cockermouth.

Cockermouth, New Hampshire, was founded in 1766. By 1792, it had grown into two geographically distinct villages. As a result Cockermouth was split. The western portion became Groton and the eastern portion became Hebron.

As a result of the town being awarded the Europe Prize in the year 2000 a Europe Prize Scholarship Fund was set up and has now become established and a great help to Cockermouth 6th form youngsters pursuing their studies in Europe. The Committee continues to raise money to keep the fund going for the foreseeable future and the Council continues to actively support the Association of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize of which it is a proud member.

The Council provides allotments on two sites St. Helen's Street and the Gote. The Gote Road allotments were transferred to the Town Council from Cumbria County Council under a community asset transfer. There are currently 30 people on the waiting list for an allotment. A successful presentation evening was held in the Council Chamber on 12 September 2017 for winners of the Garden and Allotment Competition. Your Housing removed 13-15 trees from opposite the St Helens Street allotments following a landslide.

The Town Council sponsored various events held in Cockermouth during 2017/18 including Cockermouth Carnival, Cockermouth Live, Taste Cumbria & Taste Christmas

The fireworks display held in the Memorial Gardens was a resounding success and will be repeated again this year.

Sadly the Malcolm Wilson Rally was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

Double Mills Youth Hostel has been sold subject to contract.

The usual Christmas activities organised by the Town Council took place and were well attended. We continue to be grateful for the donations made by businesses, local organisations and individuals towards the cost of the lights despite tough economic times.

Civic events organised included our Civic Service & Remembrance Sunday.

The Council's Internal Auditor, Jean Airey, a former Town Clerk of Keswick, regularly audits the Town Council's accounts and reports back to the Council. This year's annual accounts have been prepared and the Clerk will shortly be sending off the required Annual Return to the External District Auditor. The repeal of Section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 now allows enables the Town Council to finally embrace modern banking methods.

The Council continues to employ ISS Waterers Landscapes as their Maintenance Contractor for works at the Memorial Gardens.

A 30 year lease was signed with Cockermouth Junior Football Club for their future use of Tarn Close Sports Ground. Their vision involves the creation of a football centre at Tarn Close for use by all teams in the town, (junior, senior and veteran) serving in the region of 500 members initially. Their long term vision involves the erection of a synthetic indoor pitch to serve Cockermouth and the surrounding villages.

Play areas at Greyrigg Avenue, Harris Park Extension, Isel Road, Towers Lane and Memorial Gardens continue to be maintained by Cockermouth Town Council.

The Localism Bill published on the 13 December 2010 aims to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and Councils by lifting the burden of bureaucracy, empowering communities and strengthening accountability to local people. A range of new powers and reforms will be introduced as a result of the Bill.

One of those new powers is the General Power of Competence (GPC). I am pleased to announce that on the 21 May 2015, the Town Council re-confirmed that it meets both criteria for eligibility for use of the General Power of Competence as set out in a statutory instrument known as the Parish Council's (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 which came into force in April 2012.

The new General Power of Competence will fundamentally change the way Local Government behaves, giving them the same capacity to act as an individual generally which will enable us to do anything apart from that which is specifically prohibited. This will result in greater innovation and a new more confident entrepreneurial approach which should in turn lead to greater efficiencies, improved partnership working and the ability to help our community in ways previously outside our remit.

The Town Council adopted a revised Code of Conduct on 17 July 2012. Copies of the Code can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

The Town Council continues to maintain three bus shelters two on Main Street and one on Castlegate Drive.

The Town Council has been working closely with a number of voluntary organisations regarding a series of events planned to mark the 100th anniversary of the Great War. The Town Council has adopted a flower bed adjacent to Gote Bridge on the Crown Street side. This is currently being leased to the Rotary to commemorate those lost during WW1.

Our speed indication device continues to be placed at 'speeding' hotspots around the Town.

The Town Council has worked closely with Allerdale Borough Council, The Brewery, The Civic Trust and Lovell's regarding landscaping works on The Point, Brewery Head. Phase one of the scheme is now complete. A £30,000 grant has been obtained to create some permanent artwork and ongoing educational activities.

A community defibrillator has been installed in Kings Arms Lane. The Town Council continues to monitor and pay for the maintenance costs of this machine.

The Town Council were instrumental in the installation of cycle stands on the Main Street and are now responsible for their maintenance.

Usage of our banner poles on the Main Street is proving popular.

Cumbria County Council have transferred the title of land surrounding the cenotaph to Cockermouth Town Council. Cumbria County Council's two local members donated funds from their Members Allowance to permanently light up the Cenotaph.

A survey has been undertaken of the condition of the cenotaph and funding will be sought from the War Memorials Trust to undertake the necessary repairs.

All four public toilets transferred to Cockermouth Town Council on 31 July 2017. The toilets on Main Street have been fully refurbished.

The Council Chamber became an alternative venue for Cumbria County Council's Ceremony Room based in Fairfield. Our first wedding was held on 14 October 2016.

This arrangement is proving very lucrative. Seventy weddings were held in the Town Hall last year.

On 19th October 2016, Tellemachus clarified the potential feasibility and costs of deploying 3 CCTV Cameras in Cockermouth. Unfortunately, costs proved prohibitive.

2017 marks the 50th Anniversary of the first introduction of conservation areas in the

UK through the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Councillors Standage and Laidlow joined Cockermouth Civic Trust and others to play our part in a National Campaign to seek to raise the profile and implementation of Cockermouth's conservation area during 2017.

An artist Nem Sarton has been appointed to design and implement wall painted signs for two locations on the approach to Cocker Bridge to assist and encourage pedestrians/visitors to continue their journey along Main Street and explore what Market Place has to offer. The artist will use traditional techniques and materials. Funding has been secured from Allerdale Borough Council. Cockermouth Town Council will adopt the work. Consultation was undertaken in November 2017.

Finally I would also like to thank all my fellow Councillors, Sheila Brown, the Town Clerk and her staff for their support and hard work.

Mrs Miller requested examples of the Town Council promoting equality. The Mayor stated that we promoted equality in many ways and asked if she could be more specific.

Annual Report from All Saints CE Primary School

This year our school, Home School Association and parents have been busy fundraising to replace our adventure playground. During the Easter holidays we were thrilled to see the main part of our new adventure playground completed. The children came back to school very excited and have loved playing on it and experiencing new challenges. We will be having a 'Grand Opening' along with a street party to celebrate the Royal Wedding in May.

We have been delighted to receive great feedback from parents/carers following our annual music concert where our choir sang and the children performed on a wide variety of instruments. The majority of our children play an instrument and tuition for this continues to be free at All Saints' School.

Staff also held a maths evening for parents where parents experienced a maths lesson through the eyes of their children. They were able to look at the many resources that are used throughout the school and talk to their child's teacher about maths in their particular year group. Earlier in the year parents and members of the community had come into school and talked to our children to about how they used maths in their jobs. This enabled our children to see the importance and practical application of maths in the world outside the classroom.

We have now started the summer term and are once again planning our many residentials from Years 2 – 6, days out and a Saturday visit to York University to inspire all of our children to aim high!

Observations from County Councillor R Hanson

Cockermouth Town Centre Maintenance

Roadworks:

My key focus for roadworks has been on ensuring that all the legacy issues from the 2009 floods are finally dealt with. Roadworks on Gote Road and High Sand Lane are now complete despite BT's issues with delivering of their commitments (on High Sand Lane). At the time of writing the Market Place Road Works are expected to start on 8th May subject to final confirmation.

Various ordinary resurfacing work (e.g. on Isel Road) and drainage work (e.g. on Kirkfell Avenue) has also been completed.

Slippery Pavements on Main Street:

These were dealt with much more efficiently in 2018 because County were primed to move in at the first complaint (I had sent out letters to all business owners asking them to make me aware immediately of any issues in August) and were able to deep clean the pavements with better machinery than they had access to in 2017.

In 2018 we hope that we will be able to plan in advance with Allerdale Borough Council (who are responsible for cleaning the pavements to ensure they do not get into a dangerous condition in the first place) to ensure that proactive action is taken to prevent any slips occurring. Discussions on this should commence once discussions about the Market Place Roadworks conclude.

Other Cockermouth North specific Issues

Flooding issues:

Following the development of the new water flow model which takes into account the 2015 floods, a clear picture is finally starting to emerge regarding a potential solution to flooding issues in Cockermouth and I expect to write more about this over the next year on my blog. It will require substantial town action and we should gear up for this.

I attend crisis planning meetings and recently attended Cockermouth Emergency Response Group (CERG) training.

Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs):

There are historic issues to address including the need for double yellow lines at the Derwent Mills industrial estate. TRO reviews of Workington and Keswick are currently progressing and the Cockermouth review should happen in the coming year.

Speeding on Windmill Lane:

Several residents asked me to investigate this issue to see if County could either introduce more speed calming measures and/or a 20mph speed limit. The conclusions of my investigations were that, due to high density of junctions on Windmill Lane, it would be very difficult to introduce traffic calming measures (which could be counter-productive as parking would need to be removed and parked cars slow traffic down). Research shows that a 20mph speed limit which is introduced without other measures does not significantly reduce traffic speed. Recent studies indicate that accidents increase because pedestrians assume they are safer and take less care. The conclusion of this work was that measures taken by local Councillors to encourage drivers to choose to reduce their speed (e.g. by displaying 'proud to drive under 20mph

on Windmill Lane' stickers) would be most effective. I remain happy to help with any such campaigns which should be led by All Saints Councillors.

Modifications to the Main Street Crossing:

This was a project started by Cllr. Nicholson. It is currently in the County Schedule for 2019. Prior to public consultation I have requested that a full survey be carried out to assess the extent of the traffic problems this project is designed to address. This survey is currently underway.

The Kirkgate Centre:

The Kirkgate Centre provides many key services and community benefits for residents of Cockermouth. This year it has faced serious financial issues. I have worked hard to support it as it bids for funding and have successfully managed to secure £2k of Local Area Committee money to finance workshops and £40k of County money (to be delivered over four years) as match funding to draw down Arts Council England funding.

Other issues:

I have responded to well over 100 requests for support regarding issues in Cockermouth North including concerns about drains, concerns about crossing markings, issues associated with land ownership and maintenance among others. I have spent time exploring issues raised by groups ranging from athletics to fluoride.

Communication:

I publish monthly reports as well as topic-specific posts for comment. These are available at <https://councillorrebeccahanson.wordpress.com/> or on facebook at facebook.com/councillorrebeccahanson/. All residents should have received newsletters telling them what's going on and how to contact me if they have issues. Topic specific newsletters have been distributed in specific areas as and when appropriate. I knock on doors most weeks to listen to people's views and I engage with discussions on social media. I also attend and engage with groups set up to explore the concerns of individuals or groups.

After substantial engagement I have now withdrawn from the Friends of the Library Group (FOCL) because the scrutiny role for the library is being very effectively carried out by the Town Council. I have also withdrawn from the Friends of the Beach Facebook Group because I have found the behaviour of the leadership of this group to be damaging rather than constructive to the aim of retaining access to the beach at the former YHA and because I have suffered multiple untrue ad hominem attacks on the forum from the group moderator. I believe that continuing to be part this group endorses this behaviour which causes serious damage to the challenge of finding new Councillors for Cockermouth.

Wider County Issues

Administration:

The Lib Dem/Labour Coalition is functioning well and I am very impressed by the calibre of the work taking place within the Lib Dem group. The administration is looking at how local committee might have more devolved powers and there might be opportunities for double devolution (to borough and town). Views regarding what, if any, appetite there is for devolution to town level area warmly invited.

Budget:

Despite having to make further substantial budget cuts, an intelligent budget was passed which tries to ensure that cuts are made over the timescales which will prove most efficient and effective and that investment still takes place in areas where 'a stitch in time saves nine'. These 'stitch in time' measures include funding for children's social services (to enable eventual cost and service improvements) and funding for the arts (to enable Arts Council England funding to be drawn down). I am committed to addressing the concerns of those who feel that cuts are causing disproportionate damage and they are warmly invited to contact me.

Health:

In my role on Health Scrutiny I continue to work hard on the issues associated with hospital services (especially maternity services) in West Cumbria. I attend West Cumbria Community Forum (the coproduction meetings for health services) and the Maternity Working Together Steering Group (the coproduction meetings for maternity). During the last 12 months I have seen a rapid and very positive transformation in the ways in which our health providers work together to find the best possible solutions for patients.

Nuclear Issues:

I have attended County Nuclear meetings and am currently working on policy relating to the proposed Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Final comment:

I would like to thank Cllr. Eric Nicholson (former County Councillor for Cockermouth North) for his diligent and ongoing supportive handover work. I would also like to thank Cllr. Alan Kennon (County Councillor for Cockermouth South) who has been proactively helpful in all work on Cockermouth Town Centre, Cllr. Alan Smith (Leader of Allerdale Borough Council) in particular for his work on the Market Place Roadworks and The Kirkgate Centre and Cllr. Alan Tyson for his unstinting hard work on all issues as Mayor.

Mr Ward asked Councillor Hanson why there was a need to modify the Main Street crossing, what her preferred option was and why more roadworks?

Councillor Hanson replied that a full survey was currently underway to assess the extent of traffic problems and whether or not delays affected the A595 or A66. She stated she did not want more road works or traffic lights but if there were implications for ambulances they would need to act.

Mr Ward replied that it was a futile exercise.

Mr Clamp stated if the study was carried out before the 220 new houses were built the study would be useless.

Mr Hully stated that the two blackspots in Cockermouth were the roundabouts at Gote Bridge and Wordsworth House and that it was a real problem trying to get into Town from Workington.

He asked when a 20 mph speed limit would be introduced? Councillor Hanson stated that research showed that the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit without additional traffic calming measures increased accident rates as pedestrians were less cautious and offered to send this research to anyone who provided her with an email address to send it to.

He also stated that a highways analysis had not been done for stage II of the Strawberry How development. Councillor Hanson stated that she had emailed Andrew Harrison and that she would ensure that it would be done thoroughly.

Observations from County Councillor A Kennon

During the year I attended various County Committee meetings which include-

- Local Committee for Allerdale
- Allerdale Highways and Transport Working Group
- Scrutiny Advisory Board – Communities and Place

Funding for various schemes from my local area allowance to improve the town and surrounding areas has been reduced to £2000 per member this year and into the future.

Divisional Youth Funding of £1000 was awarded to Dean Parish Council towards markings and signage to improve the safety around Dean School.

Divisional Community Funding of £1000 was awarded to the Kirkgate towards their family activity sessions (2x lantern workshops and 2x comic drawing/ making workshops)

Observations from Borough Councillor L Davies

It is a privilege to be of service to the electorate of Cockermouth and the Borough of Allerdale.

Examples of my activities during the previous 12 months in All Saints Ward and Allerdale Borough Council were as follows:-

WARD WORK:-

Housing
Maintenance & Repair
Health issues
Drainage & trip hazard on the Greenway Bridge
Fly tipping – Greenway & Waste Lane

Potholes – Slatefell Avenue
Floral Tributes in Cockermouth Cemetery being destroyed by rabbits
Attending the Cockermouth & Papcastle Sport & Recreation Committee

ALLERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL:-

Served on the Licensing Panel & Licencing Committee

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES:-

Director on the Board of Trustees & Vice Chairman of the mental health charity
MIND in West Cumbria

CONCLUSION:-

I will continue to give you my very best efforts to make our Community a healthy, safe and enjoyable place to live in and be proud of.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you should consider that I can be of assistance to you and your family.

Observations from Borough Councillor J Ellis

I was pleased to be elected for Allerdale Borough Council in Christchurch Ward in September 2016 and appointed in May 2017 by the Leader to the Executive with the Portfolio for Governance and People Resources. This role also includes the Community Safety Partnership, working with a number of agencies and the Police. I enjoy the role of Executive and most importantly enjoy working with the local community in Cockermouth. As Executive member, I do not sit on any Allerdale Committees.

Local issues:-

I have worked closely with the Save Our Beach campaign and hope that Cockermouth Town Council will find a way to accommodate the many requests from the community for access to the river at Double Mills. Retailers and many residents have expressed deep concern about the potential detrimental impact on the town centre by the proposed B&M Store. The application has been submitted to Allerdale by Opus Developers. I have “called in” this application, which will now go to the Development Panel for full discussion at the end of May or early June. Cockermouth Vision has produced an excellent document on proposals for the future of the town and will meet with Allerdale’s Head of Place Development to discuss. I have worked closely with the Head and Governors of Fairfield School to develop the school’s playing field at the Levels. The Kirkgate’s application to the Arts Council was sadly declined and Allerdale has given support for this financial year. Allerdale gave a grant for distribution of the Shop Local leaflet which was delivered to every household in the town prior to Christmas. This is in addition to funding from Allerdale’s Destination Manager for a Marketing Campaign to promote the town to visitors. Working with the Home Group and the rebranded Castles and Coast (formerly Derwent and Solway), we have ensured that residents receive the best possible service from the housing

associations. The former police station at Marvejols Park is now The Hub and becomes a location for multi-agency problems solving. It will be opened officially by the Police and Crime Commissioner in due course.

Street Scene:-

Every 6 weeks along with Allerdale's Head of Community Services and Cockermouth Champion, we inspect various streets and areas of Christchurch ward including the town centre and residential areas, identifying and reporting issues such as redundant buildings, buildings in disrepair, poor signage, dog fouling, road markings, litter etc.

Informal meetings:-

I have attended meetings and met with a number of individual residents as their Allerdale member to discuss issues of concern and attempted to find solutions. These include: anti-social behaviour, street noise, neighbour disputes, grant applications, planning issues, post flooding issues, temporary road repairs and traffic lights, dog fouling, parking, service charges on social housing and many other issues.

Flood protection and Resilience:-

We continued to promote the grants for flood prevention up to the government deadline and over 1000 homes have benefitted from the flood grants administered by Allerdale. Flood prevention projects undertaken by the Environment Agency are very limited and we continue to campaign for increased funding for Cockermouth, in addition to a whole catchment approach to flood prevention.

Mrs Ellis was thanked for her comments on the Vision Document.

She was questioned regarding her 'call in' of the B & M planning application and her hopes for the application.

Mrs Ellis confirmed she was opposed to the development.

Mrs Ellis was thanked for her coherent and useful report.

Those present were reminded that when housing at Strawberry How was approved the Environment Agency had not designated the area a flood plain. Those present were encouraged to bear in mind the flood risk that 300 houses would pose.

Observations from Borough Leader A Smith

Although I am Leader of the Council, which is a full time job, I would never neglect the people of my ward.

I have supported the principle of having a masterplan for the town as put forward by a number of residents, known as the Neighbourhood Plan. BUT as I didn't have the support of the Town Council, I now fully support the Cockermouth Vision. A masterplan is needed now more than ever, after three banks and four public houses have closed and plans for a large out-of-town retail development have been lodged

with Allerdale's planners. Cockermouth is under threat as an independent shopping town and needs a plan.

You'll recall that Co-op had a refit which meant that the post office was closed for several weeks. I was pleased that they listened to my concerns and opened a mini-counter service in Fairfield car park which was very well used by all accounts which goes to show how much these services are in demand and why we shouldn't lose them.

I have been working with the County Council to try to resolve the problems of Market Place, I am happy to say work begins on 8th May, and when finished I sincerely hope that is the last we see of traffic lights and hold ups, and the town can start functioning again without all the diversions we've seen in recent months.

We've been working on a new tourism website and resources at Allerdale which I'd encourage every business in the town to sign up to once launched. This will be a great way to promote the town to new people and shout about our great town. Our new corporate website will also be launched soon which is aimed at making it easier for you all to do things online and report any issues for us to clear up. Both have taken a lot of work but are looking great.

We have been planning a promotional day for the area in Manchester in August. It's looking like it should be a good occasion, I hope the town's traders take this opportunity to showcase their wares and promote Cockermouth

The Allerdale Multi-Agency Problem Solving Hub was launched on 30 January 2018 at Cockermouth Police Station, which will hopefully better co-ordinate efforts dealing with local issues.

I'm pleased that we have experienced a relatively dry winter so far and not suffered any flooding events. We're ever aware of the threat and are working with partners to devise long-term solutions to the problem. Allerdale has also led on a grant scheme using central government funds to provide flood defences on properties in the town. This has been hugely successful, and whilst I hope we won't ever have to use them, the defences are there just in case.

Over the last few months, Allerdale BC have been developing a new programme of work called Digital Allerdale. The programme has been set up to create a world class digital environment that not only transforms how the Council operates, but also provides local businesses with a competitive advantage and enhances the quality of life of residents, which will also bring free WiFi into the Cockermouth Town Centre. More will be announced later in the year.

I was really pleased to be able to move the motion at Council to make Malcolm Wilson a Freeman of the Borough, the highest honour we at Allerdale can bestow on anyone. Malcolm is an inspiration to any business owner in the area and I'm so proud that he's based near Cockermouth – bringing the investment and employment to the town.

I'll continue to support events and festivals in the town to bring trade and business to the shops, pubs and restaurants. Taste Cumbria was the most successful event ever

last year and goes from strength to strength. It'll return again this year, as will Northbound which is growing in popularity. There are a few other events we're supporting as a Council, details will be announced nearer the time.

I also hope to look at the swimming pool and leisure centre in Cockermouth with a view to improving the facilities on offer, as well as conducting a Sports Analysis Survey, for the Sporting Clubs in the Town.

Mrs Telford thanked Councillor Alan Smith for his support of the Cockermouth Vision and her disappointment that the Town Council had not agreed to do a Neighbourhood Plan.

She asked Councillor Alan Smith if he supported an out of town B & M Home Store.

Councillor Alan Smith replied that the Development Panel will determine the application. He acknowledged that many in his ward would like a B & M's. He further stated that that the town was under threat whether B & M's came or not. Seven big premises had been lost. A master plan was required.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the negative effect that an out of town B & M Home store would have on our town centre.

Mr Ward asked what Councillor Alan Smith's rationale was in abstaining from the B & M vote? He stated that as Leader of Allerdale Borough Council he formulated policy and investment to encourage retail to come to Workington. There had been no such cash incentives for Cockermouth. Town Managers should go out and actively seek investment.

Mrs Sanders asked if the Town Council should re-visit the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Davies stated a Neighbourhood Plan would not stop development.

The Mayor stated that the majority of town councillors supported Allerdale's local plans. Neighbourhood plans were costly and time consuming.

Mr Ward suggested that the sale of Double Mills would release funding.

Councillor Hanson stated that B & M must provide an accurate retail analysis. Under Allerdale's Local Plan a B & M Home store should be located in Workington and that the Local Plan also contained strong guidance in favour of town centre retail.

Mr Crowley stated that that in his opinion the Local Plan was not worth the paper it was written on.

Mrs Miller argued that residents wanted a greater place shaping role.

The Mayor ended the discussion by stating that a Neighbourhood Plan offered no greater protection.

Observations from Borough Councillor C Smith

It has been a privilege to represent All Saints again for the past 12 months.

I am a member of the Borough's Standards Committee.

I am also a member of Licensing Committee, which I find very interesting and appreciate how the decisions we take can have an impact on the lives of many of our residents so we have to get it right. We've reviewed our taxi licensing policy this past few months, which looks to improve the safety of taxi customers.

I have 100% attendance for Full Council.

I am still involved and supporting the Highfield Residents Association, well done to the Residents Association for all their hard work, in delivering quality events into their community facility, again as a Councillor showing commitment to my ward.

Once again, I am pleased to report that the 10p swims have been a fantastic success, during the school holiday, which have been funded by Allerdale Borough Council and the Sports Centre contractor GLL, this is for the seventh year running.

I look forward to the next 12 months, where once again Allerdale BC will deliver quality into All Saints Ward and Cockermouth

Cockermouth & Papcastle Recreational Trust

The report outlined the activities of the Trust over the last 12 months.

Questions of which 48 hours written notice had been given

Question 1 from Richard Watson:

'Will town councillors reconsider their decision to sell the land at Double Mills in its entirety and instead retain in public ownership that section of the land which lies between the public right of way and the river?

Mr Watson stated that he had four fruitful meetings with Mr Gerrard and that Mr & Mrs Gerrard were happy to leave the beach in town ownership for the same price.

Answer was read out by the Mayor:

Mr Gerrard's offer to purchase land and buildings in entirety was made on January 17th 2018, this morning we have received a request to change the conditions of this contract.

The Town Council will consider this at our 20 June 2018 Town Council meeting.

Fishing rights will remain with Cockermouth Town Council.

Mr Tyson informed those present that the Town Council had been notified on 5th April 2018, that a national developer was keen to potentially make an unconditional offer. No action was taken as the sale with our preferred bidder was progressing. Carigiet Cowen confirmed on Friday 4 May 2018 that the unconditional offer was from Mr Chris Watson @ McCarthy & Stone for his wife's business.

Mr Chris Watson withdrew his offer.

Mr Tyson stated that between January 22nd 2018 and March 25th 2018, Mr Gerrard had tried his best to reach an agreement with Mr Richard Watson. He further stated that on 27th March 2018 that Mr Gerrard had emailed listing who he had spoken to and said 'I think Richard Watson is trying to torpedo the sale'

Several members of the public expressed their anger that divulging this information in a public meeting appeared to be a breach of privacy.

Mr Richard Watson denied knowing anything about his son's offer. He re-iterated that he wanted the sale to go ahead and that he wanted the beach to remain in public ownership.

The Mayor apologised to the meeting.

Question 2 from Chris Watson regarding pot holes:-

'What measures are in place to fill the pot holes on Strawberry How and remainder of the town?

The answer was given by County Councillor Alan Kennon:-

We understand and appreciate the frustration that Cumbrian residents are experiencing. This winter has proven to be a real challenge to Cumbria County Council Highway services. It has been colder and wetter than the previous few years and as a result, there are more road defects and increased pressure on the network. The significant, prolonged wet periods have been closely followed by lengthy spells of cold weather, leading to substantial additional freeze-thaw action and the accelerated deterioration of our roads. This is a situation not unique to Cumbria and many of our neighbouring authorities are having the same challenge.

Repairs done at this time of year when roads are cold and wet are less likely to be as effective as repairs done in warmer, drier conditions. There have been very few periods of warmer, drier weather for us to undertake permanent repairs; therefore often the only option available to us, in order to keep roads safe, is temporary work. We appreciate that this has dismayed some customers who expect more but unfortunately, as explained, permanent solutions are not always effective if road temperatures are low and rather than closing roads, a temporary fix is a more appropriate solution. Our intention is to effect quality permanent repairs as soon as we are out of the winter weather period.

Our teams continue to work hard to manage the increased number of defects but the reality is that we need to prioritise carefully. The Council has had to take nearly £200m out of its revenue budgets in the last 8 years – with further cuts still to be made. We simply do not have the money available to invest in all the proactive maintenance we would like or to divert money from other essential council services into our roads.

We are grateful when our customers identify and report problems and defects to us but as explained, we are not always able to meet their expectations, particularly when the defect does not fall within our priority specifications. Given the extenuating circumstances and our limited resources, we are doing all we can to keep on top of the damage and ensure the highways are safe for all road users.

Question 3 is from Chris Watson regarding play facilities for Riverdale Estate:

'Are there funds available (via S106 commuted sums) to reinstate the children's play park at the Trim Trail (lower Harris Park) and up at Greyrigg Avenue as there are many children on Riverdale Estate and no suitable play areas?

The answer was given by Borough Council Leader Alan Smith:

The two play areas mentioned by Mr Watson do not belong to Allerdale Borough Council, they belong and are looked after by Cockermouth Town Council.

Regarding Accessing Funds from S106 Agreements.

There are tight rules regarding Section 106 Agreements, and would appertain to developments in that specific area, as with Strawberry Grange Development, there is a distinct link between the development and Bell Brig Park.

So in essence the answer is no, but if there was a planning application in the future on the Riverdale Estate area, then this could be addressed then.

Question 4 is from Chris Watson regarding the library:

'What further measures are being put in place to ensure Cockermouth Library is sustainable and accessible to the vulnerable, elderly and young? How is the promotion activity going as I haven't really seen anything to openly encourage me to come in with the children (unless I physically walk past)

The answer was given by the Mayor:

The Town Council took over the library building and staffing twelve months ago to ensure its sustainability. We were joined by Allerdale local office to provide a one stop shop.

Cumbria County Council will continue to supply material to appeal to a wide range of people including the vulnerable, elderly and young. The material will be in a number of formats including printed books and talking books. People who join the library at Cockermouth are given the same access to a wide range of digital resources as people who join any library in Cumbria or online. This includes magazines, encyclopaedia Britannica and e:books.

Over the past year the activities run at Cockermouth Library by Cumbria Library Service included an author talk for adults and holiday craft activities for children. Major promotions and events, such as the summer reading challenge and fall prevention week are run in Cockermouth in exactly the way as in all of the County Council's libraries. As well as producing posters for display in the library to advertise these events, the local media are informed of them through press releases. All are also advertised on County's facebook page, twitter account and an e:newsletter that people are asked to sign up to when they visit CCC's website.

Question 5 is from Chris Watson regarding a community app:

Would the Town Council consider creating a community app which would assist with the social media interface and engage the broad church community we have here? It would be useful to advertise (for free) the upcoming events and interesting community news.

The answer was given by the Mayor:

Event advertising at the library itself is both free and substantial – we would not wish to discourage footfall in the library or the town.

We do not currently have the staff resources to create and maintain a community app.

Question 6 is from Chris Watson regarding road closures:

‘What measures will the council take to ensure residents and businesses are not impacted by a full road closure in the future which may dissect one part of the town from another?’

The closure of Lorton Road recently had impacted residents resulting in a 12 mile round trip.

The answer was given by County Councillor A Kennon:

Traffic that needs to be diverted due to a road closure must be kept on the same class of road (i.e. A, B, C or unclassified road) or above, and must be suitable for use by all traffic that may use the section being closed. The people doing the job policed it themselves that is why there were no diversion signs.

Mr Hully asked if cars were being removed off St Helens Street during the Market Street Improvements. Councillor Hanson stated that a section near Kirkgate was being cleared and that those affected had been informed. She further stated that works had been delayed and would commence on 21 May 2018.

Question 7 from Chris Watson regarding the Lantern Festival:

‘As previously mentioned this was a great event. What similar events do the Council have planned and how can I/residents be involved to make them a great success?’

The Mayor handed Chris Watson a list of events to be held in Cockermouth for the rest of this year. He also emphasised how important financial support was to these events.

Mr Cornwall stated that Cockermouth Live were always in need of stewards.

Question 8 is from Chris Watson regarding traffic wardens:

‘What is the motivation and reason to place parking tickets on cars at Market Place within minutes of the time expiring’

The answer was given by Borough Leader Alan Smith:

ABC Car Park Wardens enforce on the Bitterbeck Beck Car, they issue a number of FPN to vehicles that were not displaying a valid parking ticket, they do not enforce On Street Parking.

The Car Park is well signposted, ABC have recently upgraded the car parking machines to take overnight payments, and they take cash and card payments.

Local hoteliers are aware of this. Borough Council's have to enforce. Over the Easter weekend, wardens had given motorists some leeway, the first ticket was not issued until 7.26am.

Mr Hully complained about the lack of Police enforcement of vehicles parked on double yellow line on Station Street.

Councillor Smith stated that once the Market Place Improvement works were carried out there will be lines and Cumbria County Council would be able to enforce.

Question 9 is from Chris Watson Regarding the Town Hall:

'Can we make the town hall more accessible to other groups and not just for weddings. Would you let me know how many weddings and bookings occurred during the last year as I can't think it would be many?

The answer was given by the Mayor:

70 weddings & 94 room hires occurred during 2017.

Weddings benefit the whole of the community as up to 60 guests can be staying, eating and shopping locally.

Mr Chippendale praised staff for their efforts.

Question 10 is from Felicity Crowley regarding surgeries:

'Would the Town Council implement regular surgeries as Allerdale do (maybe even co-ordinating the surgeries with them) to give the townsfolk an opportunity to meet and discuss issues of the day with their representatives

The Mayor gave the following answer:-

David Malloy informed those present that he would trial surgeries during his Mayoral Year.

Other councillors e.g. Len Davies have trialled surgeries in the past but attendance was poor.

Most councillors prefer to be contacted either via phone, email, letter or in person.

Councillor Alan Smith commented that surgeries were fine unless the issue under discussion was urgent.

Mrs Crowley also requested the councillor photographs be added to our website.

The councillors present introduced themselves.

Question 11 is from Margaret Miller regarding library opening hours:

'Can the Town Council inform me how they have assessed the needs of children and young people and people of working age in relation to the opening hours of the library given the Town Council's refusal to carry out a user survey?

The Mayor gave the following answer:-

The library building now houses Allerdale Customer Services, Tourist Information Centre as well as the library. We must have two staff in the building at all times. During week days we have one Town Council and one Allerdale member of staff on duty. This provides six hours of daily service – we do not close at lunchtime. and we do not close on a Thursday as previously. We are also open for four hours each Saturday and the majority of bank holidays. We have been operating for over twelve months. There have been no complaints from children, young people or people of working age. The only complaint about opening hours is from ‘Friends of the Library’. No serious evidence has been provided by the Group.

Mrs Miller further stated that The Friends of the Library had flagged up their concerns regarding the lack of late night opening during the transfer. She explained that she would like to see the library open to 5pm or 6pm one or two nights per week.

Mr Ward stated that we needed to be mindful that the library building also included the Tourist Information Service and Allerdale Borough Council’s Area Office.

Councillor Hanson stated that usage between 5pm and 6pm had been low and that the library was heavily used between 10.00am and 11.00am. There was a strong case for leaving the hours as they were.

Councillor A Smith expressed the view that the Town Council should discuss this issue.

Question 12 from Diana Johnson regarding the notice of meeting:

‘In future when announcing the annual meeting saying that notice of items to be raised must be given to the Chairman in advance please can the notice include details of how to contact the Chairman?’

The Mayor replied:

Yes

Question 13 from Diana Johnson regarding an answerphone:

‘Please can we have an answerphone for the Town Hall telephone?’

The Mayor replied:

Yes we will investigate this issue.

Question 14 from Diana Johnson regarding a Geological Disposal Facility for Nuclear Waste:

Did Cockermouth Town Council respond to the Government Consultation this year on a Geological Disposal Facility for Nuclear Waste and what did they say?

The Government has said that only communities which show an interest in hosting the facility will be consulted. Please will Cockermouth Town Council ensure that they do not claim that our community is interested in hosting it without consulting us by holding a referendum. Please will they also do all

that they can to prevent other councils in this area, or other local bodies, claiming that our community is interested in hosting it without holding a referendum?

The Town Clerk replied:

The Town Council had not responded to a Government Consultation this year on a Geological Disposal Facility for Nuclear Waste. The most recent response to a consultation on a Geological Disposal Facility for Nuclear Waste was given in November 2013.

Councillor Alan Smith outlined Allerdale's recent response to the consultation.

Councillor Hanson outlined the work she had been doing on Cumbria County Council's response and suggested that those wishing to influence on this issue should talk to their Borough and County councillors.

Question 15 from David Cornwall regarding promotion to visitors:

'Could you tell me what the Council has done to promote the Town of Cockermouth to visitors? How have the Council evaluated their promotion activities and how effective were their promotion activities?'

The Mayor replied as follows:

Cockermouth Town Council runs the towns Tourist Information Centre. We promote Cockermouth and the surrounding area to those wishing to visit and those visiting.

The Town Council supports financially many town events e.g. Taste Cumbria, Taste Christmas, Cockermouth Live and Cockermouth Carnival.

We also organise our own events e.g. lights switch on day and the fireworks which draw in large crowds to the Town. The combination of Christmas lights and the shop window competition, superb this year, bring many people into town.

Weddings are proving to be increasingly popular and bring footfall into the Town. The Town Council also promotes local wedding related businesses.

We monitor daily footfall in the Tourist Information Centre.

We monitor attendance at our own events.

Mr Cornwall stated that Cockermouth was a secret.

It was acknowledged that all parties present could do more to be pro-active.

Question 16 from David Cornwall:

'Does the Council provide professional development for their staff. If so, how are development priorities identified. If not, why not?'

The Mayor gave the following answer:

The Town Council provides a training budget

The Town Clerk identifies training needs of all her staff.

The meeting closed at 9.33 pm