

Minutes of a Meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Laidlow (Mayor)
Councillor S Barnes
Councillor H Beanland
Councillor M Bowman
Councillor C Bell
Councillor I Burns
Councillor C Bridgman
Councillor D Malloy
Councillor G Telford
Councillor H Tucker
Councillor R Watson

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Samson

There was 1 member of the press and three members of the public present.

20 Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 May 2023 were signed as a correct record.

21 Minutes

The minutes of the special planning meeting held on 1 June 2023 were signed as a correct record.

Councillor Barnes expressed his disappointment regarding the resolution of Minute 18 (2023/24), in relation to planning application FUL/2023/0088 particularly in relation to the massing of the flats i.e. three storey rather than four storey.

Councillor Telford informed those present that the application and been called in and would be discussed by Cumberlands' Planning Committee.

22 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Tucker declared that she was a substitute member of the Planning Committee of Cumberland Council.

23 Mayors Announcements

The Mayor had attended the following engagements since her last

meeting:-

Unveiling of Civic Trust Plaques depicting the old watermills of Cockermouth

Town Trail

Town Council Fun Day

Cockermouth Mountain Rescue 70th Anniversary dinner at Hundith Hill

24 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

25 Planning Applications

FUL/2023/0120

Change of use to offices

18, The Store, South Street, Cockermouth

Recommended – approval

FUL/2023/0112

Replacement of wood single glazed windows with upvc white double glazed

Flat 2, Anderson Court, Sullart Street

Recommended - approval

26 Tree Works

Recommended – That application CAT/2023/0013 relating to various tree works at Anderson Court, Sullart Street be approved.

27 Finance

Resolved – (a) That payments in the amount of £13,186.97 be authorised.

28 LGR Newsletters

Cumberland Council is backing half a million pounds of investment into its Communities. Senior councillors agreed that the money would be passed to eight Community Panels who will plough it into grass roots projects specifically tailored local issues.

Councillor Tucker explained that each panel had been allocated £60k.

Agreed - That the contents of the 11/6, 4/6, 28/5, 21/5 & 14/5/2023 LGR newsletters be noted.

29 Calc News

Councillor Telford stated the the new councillor training she had undertaken had been very useful.

Agreed – That the contents of the March & April 2023 Calc News be noted.

30 Application to display a banner

Resolved – That Cockermouth Festivals Group be given retrospective approval to advertise Cockermouth Live on lamppost numbers 15, 17, 19, 24, 26, 30, 17, 20, 25 & 27 between 1 June 2023 and 3 July 2023.

31 Solar Made Easy

Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) is planning to work with the Council to bring the Solar Made Easy project to Cockermouth. The launch is planned to take place in the United Reformed Church on 2 November 2023 between 7pm – 9pm.

At the event, local residents and business can ask solar related questions and view an interactive solar PV map of the community which will give them an indication of the potential of their roof. Residents will also be invited to register their interest in the scheme. Those who register will be sent a questionnaire to complete with their property information. That information is then sent onto two of CAfS installers who have been allocated to that community. The householders receive two quotes and are free to chose whichever they prefer or neither.

CAfS has a project budget which will cover the cost of the event and promotion. The Mayor, Councillor Laidlow had agreed to open the event.

The event would be publicised locally in advance.

Agreed – That the contents of the briefing note be noted.

32 Licensing Act 2003 – Consultation on Statement of Licensing Policy 2023-2028 and Gambling Act 2005 – Consultation on Statement of Gambling Policy 2023-2026

Cumberland Council was formed on 1 April 2023. Under the Gambling Act 2005, each local authority is required to prepare and publish their statement of policy every three years. The sovereign Licensing Authorities had their own Gambling Licensing Policy which were due for review in January 2025. In line with legislation, a draft policy has been prepared to produce a Cumberland Council Policy. No substantive changes have been made to the contents of the sovereign documents in bringing them together to produce this policy and in principle is identical to the policies previously in place.

Also under the Licensing Act 2003, each local authority is required to prepare and Publish their statement of policy every five years. The sovereign Licensing Authorities had their own Licensing Policies which were due for review in January 2026. In line with legislation, a draft policy has been prepared to produce a Cumberland Council policy. No substantive changes have been made to the contents of the sovereign documents in bringing them together to produce this policy and in principle is identical to the policies previously in place.

Prior to the adoption of the policies there must be a period of consultation with a wide range of organisations as specified in the legislation.

Councillor Telford stated that it was important to get these policies right given the number of suicides related to problem gambling.

Resolved – That no comment be made.

33 Clerks Report

Those present considered the content of the Clerk's report.

Resolved – a) That the content of the report be noted.

b) That Chimney Sheep Limited be thanked for their donation toward surveying and repairing the fire damaged ancient ash tree in the Memorial Gardens.

c) That the Town Clerk provide details of the private garden and allotment judging to all councillors.

34 Special Planning

Those present considered whether to trial the circulation of planning applications between town council meetings rather than holding special planning meetings.

Councillor Laidlow stated that circulation does not work. Councillor Telford agreed.

Resolved – That Special Planning meetings continue to be held on the first Thursday of every month (if required).

35 Climate Change Action

Agreed – That Councillor Tucker circulate details relating to an anti-idling campaign for information and that these details be circulated.

36 Twinning Fund Raiser

Councillor Telford wish to hold a small fundraiser in early September 2023 in either the Kirkgate Centre or Church rooms to raise money for the twinning. Councillor Tucker kindly agreed to assist her. Town Council staff agreed to assist with posters, tickets, raffle tickets etc.

Resolved – That the fundraiser be held.

37 Fitz Ward Path

Councillor Telford raised concerns regarding the danger presented to pedestrians by the new path linking the top of the Laureates estate with Brigham Road. This path is frequently used by parents taking their children to Fairfield School. Only a tiny strip of grass separates the path from the extremely busy A66.

The Site Manager of Lovells estate has been told that there are no plans to put any safety measures in place.

Councillor Barnes questioned why the path had been located outside the hedge.

Councillor Malloy suggested that the plans for the estate be examined.

Councillor Watson stated that either the path be moved or a barrier erected.

Resolved – a) That a letter be sent to the Highways Department of Cumberland Council requesting a site visit as a matter of urgency along with a request that the new path be deemed a safe route to school.

b) That a letter be sent to the Planning Department of Cumberland Council asking for the matter to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

38 Recruitment Process for new Town Clerk

Councillor Bowman stated that the Town Council had been well served by the existing clerk. She explained in detail the two part process that was envisioned in order to recruit a suitable well qualified replacement for Mrs Brown who was retiring on 31 October 2023.

She proposed that Councillors Bowman, Samson, Beanland & Bridgman (who each have suitable experience in the recruitment of staff into leadership/senior management roles form a sub committee with the following terms of reference:

- a) To undertake the process of seeking applications for the Town Clerk role, receiving the applications and selecting candidates for the short list
- b) To use advice from the incumbent and the Civility and Respect Recruitment Process Manual and accompanying documents, appendices etc. to compile a Job Applicants' Pack including Job Description, Person Specification for the role, terms and conditions, salary parameters, etc., and other documents needed from applicants (e.g. application form, if required, details of referees and equal opportunities monitoring form).
- c) To draw up suitable advertising materials and to issue them using a range of media on or around 30 June 2023 with an appropriate deadline for applications four weeks after issue of the job advertisement (i.e. on or around 28 July 2023) and noting the likely date/s for interviews w/c 21 August 2023)
- d) To receive the job applications and to select a shortlist of appointable candidates in time for the 16 August 2023 Town Council meeting.

The selection of the preferred candidate from those shortlisted was to be undertaken by all 12 councillors. Candidates will be asked to make a 20 minute presentation discussing the potential issues and opportunities which may follow from the new unitary authority Cumberland Council.

The aim was to agree a start date before 31 October 2023 if possible to enable a hand over.

It was further proposed that the Town Council ratifies the appointment at its meeting on 16 September 2023 and receive and agree proposals for an induction process.

Councillor Watson seconded Councillor Bowmans proposal.

Councillor Malloy stated that it was disrespectful that a councillor with 20+ years of

experience had not been invited to join the sub committee.

Councillor Laidlow asked why Councillor Burns had not been asked. She had played a key role in the recruitment of the current clerk.

Councillor Bowman replied that the composition of the sub committee was a proposal and that the four chosen had the relevant experience.

Councillor Malloy stated that the Council was a disjointed unpleasant place to be and the whole sorry mess has been created by others around the table and that he would not be taking part in any of the process.

Councillor Bowman refuted that statement and emphasised that it was the role of councillors collectively, as the employer to take responsibility for recruitment.

Councillor Barnes expressed his concern that the sub committee was not politically proportionate and that those chosen did not have a lot of Town Council experience.

Councillor Telford suggested a compromise solution be found.

Councillor Bridgman offered to withdraw.

Councillor Barnes was asked if he would stand, but he declined stating that he was not a long standing councillor either.

Councillor Bowman asked Councillor Burns if she would stand.

Councillor Burns stated that she had offered her services but had been told that she was not good enough.

A recorded vote was requested on the composition, terms of reference, delegation, quorum and timetable proposed -

Councillor Barnes stated that although he agreed with the process proposed, he was concerned about the composition and experience of the sub committee and for that reason he would abstain from voting.

A vote was taken:

Councillor Barnes	Abstain
Councillor Beanland	For
Councillor Bowman	For
Councillor Bell	Abstain

Councillor Burns	Abstain
Councillor Bridgman	For
Councillor Laidlow	Abstain
Councillor Malloy	Abstain
Councillor Telford	Abstain
Councillor Tucker	For
Councillor Watson	For

5 for, 6 abstentions.

Motion carried.

Resolved – a) That councillors Bowman, Samson, Beanland & Bridgman form a sub committee

b) That the terms of reference be as follows:-

- i. To undertake the process of seeking applications for the Town Clerk role, receiving the applications and selecting candidates for the short list
- ii. To use advice from the incumbent and the Civility and Respect Recruitment Process Manual and accompanying documents, appendices etc. to compile a Job Applicants' Pack including Job Description, Person Specification for the role, terms and conditions, salary parameters, etc., and other documents needed from applicants (e.g. application form, if required, details of referees and equal opportunities monitoring form)
- iii. To draw up suitable advertising materials and to issue them using a range of media on or around 30 June 2023 with an appropriate deadline for applications four weeks after issue of the job advertisement (i.e. on or around 28 July 2023) and noting the likely date/s for interviews w/c 21 August 2023)
- iv. To receive the job applications and to select a shortlist of appointable candidates in time for the 16 August 2023 Town Council meeting

c) That delegated powers be given as listed above

d) That the quorum be set at 3 of the 4 councillors

e) That the term of office of the sub committee ends after the shortlisting of appointable candidates

f) That the draft timetable be agreed.

meeting closed at 8.07 pm

