

Minutes of a Meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 19 July 2023 at 7.00 pm

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Laidlow

There were two members of the public present.

47 Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 June 2023 be signed as a correct record.

Arising from minute 37, Councillor Telford reported that Lovell had confirmed that the pathway that leads from their development and runs adjacent to the A66 had been built in line with approved drawings and that it had been inspected by National Highways and that Lovell was currently responding to the issues raised.

48 Minutes

Agreed – That the minutes of the Town Clerk Recruitment Sub Committee be noted.

49 Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the last Special Planning meeting held on 6 July 2023 be signed as a correct record.

50 Declaration of Interests

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

51 Mayors Announcements

Deputy Mayor had attended the following events since the last meeting:-

Wigton Carnival
Gt. Broughton Carnival
Concert by Castlegate Singers
Skate Park Presentations

52 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

53 Planning Applications

Change of use from class E to hot food take away

Land and garage to the rear of Station Street, Cockermouth

Those present expressed concern regarding the opening hours proposed:-

Monday to Friday	11.00am - 1.00am
Saturday	11.00am - 2.00am
Sunday & Bank holidays	11.00am - 2.00am

They felt that opening this late would be unneighbourly as it would generate traffic on Station Street and encourage anti-social behaviour.

If approved, the hot food take away should close much earlier in line with other such premises close by.

The long working hours and unsuitable staff welfare accommodation (no shower provided) were also discussed.

Recommended – Refusal due to unneighbourly opening hours proposed and unsuitable staff welfare accommodation.

If approved it was recommended that the hot food take away close at 12.00 midnight on a Saturday and 11.00pm on all other days.

54 Finance

Resolved – (a) That payments in the amount of £10,429.92 be authorised.

55 Budget Comparison

The Town Clerk offered further training on the budget to those who requested it.

Agreed – That the financial budget comparison report between 1 April 23 – June 23 be noted.

56 LGR Newsletters

Councillor Malloy asked the Town Clerk to find out what summer holiday activity and Food (HAF) activities would be taking place in Cockermouth .

He also asked the Town Clerk to find out if any of the £1m funding from the Sellafield Social Impact Investment Fund will be spent in Cockermouth in the next 12 months and expressed his disappointment that the bin strike had not been resolved. He informed those present that the matter had recently been referred to ACAS.

Agreed - That the contents of the 16/6, 25/6, 2/7 & 9/7/23 LGR newsletters be noted.

57 Clerks Report

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

Members discussed replacing the ageing roundabout due to the cost of repair and whether or not to trim the edge of the Memorial Gardens between Gote Bridge and Millers Bridge.

Councillor Watson informed those present that he had met the Parks Manager of Cumberland Council to discuss the removal of barriers along the Greenway to facilitate access for all users. He had promised to review the matter and remove those he felt could be removed safely.

Councillor Telford had spoken to members of the Castlegate Choir regarding the proposed 2024 choir exchange. She informed those present that her twinning fundraiser would be held on 29 September 2023.

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

b) That the edge of the Memorial Gardens between Gote Bridge and Millers Bridge be trimmed.

c) That due to the cost of repair, the older roundabout in the Memorial Gardens be replaced with a more disability friendly piece of equipment. Clerk to investigate cost.

d) Clerk to follow up on cost of noticeboard.

58 Climate Change Action

Councillor Watson informed those present that the two EV charging points in Wakefield Road Car Park were being installed by Charge My Street. They were also looking at the feasibility and cost of installing more in Fairfield and Bitterbeck Car Parks.

Councillor Bridgman reported that a new Cockermouth Sustainability Group was to be launched in September 2023. Those present discussed inviting members of the Group to a future meeting of the Town Council once they were up and running.

59 Discussion paper on the repair, maintenance and development of footpaths in Cockermouth

Councillor Beanland submitted a discussion paper regarding the repair, maintenance and development of Cockermouth footpaths.

Some of the footpaths in Cockermouth are in a poor state of maintenance.

He gave the following examples:-

The steps leading and footpath from Dale View to the old railway bridge
The path on the north side of Double Mills bridge
The footway from Kirkgate to the footbridge over Bitter Beck near St. Helens Street
The footway from Slatefell Estate to the Kirkgate Centre car park.

He suggested that a survey of the footpaths/ways in each ward be undertaken by the councillors for that ward or their proxies.

On the basis of the survey, the town council would draw up a voluntary group whose members would undertake remedial work to solve minor maintenance issues such as cleanliness, weeding etc. Where the work was of a more serious nature and could not be undertaken by volunteers, then external contractors would be asked for estimates/quotes and the budget adjusted accordingly to enable this work to be undertaken during a specified time period. He further suggested that a long term plan for footpath improvement and development be drawn up.

Councillor Burns stated that Cumberland Council were responsible for public rights of way. She expressed concern regarding volunteers using equipment, training and insurance.

Councillor Malloy referred to the discouraging email from Countryside Access which stated that works must comply with CDM regulations and British Standards and the requirement for liability insurance etc if working on public rights of way. He added that Cumberland should survey their own footpaths. Strawberry How was a temporary path which was created when the old path was stopped up. The new path would meander through the new estate once it was completed.

Councillor Beanland argued that some of the paths were not public rights of way and that local councils were able to carry out works. He had been a member of the Fix The Fells for over ten years and the issue of comebacks had never arisen. Works would be covered by our insurance.

Councillor Telford stated that ownership could be fraught.

Councillor Bowman said that she was in favour of the broad thrust of the paper and suggested that a survey be undertaken to find out where the main areas of concern were.

Councillor Burns agreed to that suggestion in principle. She stated the Cumberland Council needed to be held accountable. She stated that she was more concerned about the condition of the paths that no-one wanted to take responsibility for.

Councillor Beanland proposed that the footpaths/paths be surveyed. He offered to design a pro-forma to assist the process. Councillor Tucker seconded the proposal.

A vote was taken. All were in favour.

Resolved – That a survey of the footpaths/ways be undertaken by the councillors for that ward or their proxies using a proforma designed by Councillor Beanland and that the findings be collated and sent to the Director of Highways.

60 Anti-social behaviour in Cockermouth

The residents of Double Mills wished to flag up increasing levels of anti social behaviour that was occurring across Cockermouth from what seemed to be a relatively small number of children of both primary and secondary school age.

They requested that a meeting be convened with interested parties e.g. the Town Council, Secondary and Primary Schools Heads, Police and any other community interested parties such as the Chamber of Commerce to agree a strategy and action plan to begin to address this issue.

Councillor Burns agreed to provide the contact for a senior officer.

Councillor Barnes criticised the lack of police present at Town Council meetings and Stated that even though we had a police station on the edge of town, folk did not feel safe in their own homes.

Councillor Bell stated that vandalism had put 6 shops out of business for a week and that she had tried her hardest to get anti-social behaviour resolved. The Town needed more police presence.

Councillor Malloy asked how many examples of anti-social behaviour we were aware of?

Councillor Tucker stated that the Police should be informing us of incidents.

Councillor Samson queried the Police Strategy for Cockermouth.

Councillor Malloy suggested a general discussion with the Police and that PCSO's should visit the schools to dissuade anti-social behaviour.

Resolved – a) That a senior ranking police officer be invited to future meeting to discuss their current approach to policing in Cockermouth & that a copy of the request be sent to the Police & Crime Commissioner.

b) That the Town Clerk enquires if our CCTV has been used in the detection of a crime.

meeting closed at 20.34 pm