

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the council chamber,
Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 20th November 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes

Councillor Catherine Bell

Councillor Chris Bridgman

Councillor David Malloy

Councillor Gillian Telford

Councillor Howard Beanland

Councillor Marion Bowman

Councillor Isabel Burns

Councillor Jim Samson

Councillor Richard Watson (Mayor)

Cumberland Councillor Helen Tucker

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Clerk

Guest Speakers, Jordan Reece and Julie Ward

Members of the public: 2

Before the meeting opened, the Clerk reminded councillors that as this meeting was being held during a pre-election period of sensitivity, they should not make political comments or express views about either candidate.

19:00 Meeting opened.

170/24 Apologies Councillor Julie Laidlow and Cumberland Councillor Andy Semple had sent apologies.

171/24 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 16th October 2024. Resolved to approve the minutes as a correct record.

172/24 Minutes of the Special Planning Meeting of 6th November 2024. Resolved to approve the minutes as a correct record.

173/24 Declarations of interest None

174/24 Guest Speaker – Julie Ward, Cumberland Council gave advice on community led (Town) and neighbourhood plans. She explained the relevant law and difference between the two types of plans, and gave an indication of how long they would take to complete.

175/24 Guest Speaker – Jordan Reece, Cash Access UK updated councillors on the progress towards the banking hub. It was hoped that the hub would be running by the middle of next year. They were currently looking for locations where an interim hub could be set up inside a current business or building. They would come back to hold a drop-in style event in the new year.

176/24 Mayors Announcements. The Mayor had attended the fireworks event on 3rd November. There was a follow up meeting about the High Street task force that he had attended, as well as the Remembrance Service on 10th. On 15th there was a meeting to discuss a possible location for a bike/skate park and on 17th there was the Christmas lights switch on.

As Deputy Mayor, Councillor Telford had gone with the twinning trip to Marvejols and had attended a service at Buttermere church for the unveiling of a memorial plaque for 8 members of the Canadian Royal Airforce who had lost their lives in June 1944.

The Mayor thanked all those who had helped with the three Town Council events and said that he thought they had gone very well.

177/24 Reports from Cumberland Councillors Cllr Semple (Cockermouth South) had submitted a written report. Cllr Tucker said that there was a lot of work going on in the background in connection with the Old Courthouse, but she was unable to share details as it was a legal matter. She had called in the Fitz application. Cumberland had been granted an additional £5.3m for bus services. The survey would be extended until the end of January. Cllr Burns asked if we could find out about the Town bus service. Cllr Tucker would see what she could find out.

178/24 Public participation. None.

179/24 Planning

- **2/24/9005 Resolved** to recommend approval.

180/24 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. None

181/24 Climate Emergency Group. The planned meeting had been postponed and they still awaited updates from the last meeting.

182/24 Neighbourhood/Town Plan No report.

183/24 Request for Funding - CADS. Resolved to agree to the grant of £350.

184/24 Internal Auditor's Report. Resolved to note receipt of the report. Cllr Beanland asked for the expenditure over £500 document to be scanned in landscape orientation when posted to the website.

185/24 Actions from Internal Auditor's Report. The Clerk would update the risk assessment within the financial year. The Clerk would draft an asset policy before the end of the financial year. **Resolved** that the asset value would be restated on the

AGAR to reflect historic cost in line with best practice outlined in the Joint Practitioners' Guide

186/24 External Auditor's Response to a Complaint. The external auditor had received a complaint against the 2022/2023 accounts and had now concluded their investigation and issued their response. The cost of this investigation, which is borne by the Council, was around £4500 **Resolved** to note the response as received.

187/24 Actions from the External Auditor's Report. The auditor found that the Council was using the Memorial Gardens reasonably and should continue to maintain the grass as it had been doing. The auditor asked that the Council receives the report at a meeting, and minutes the receipt. This had been done by the previous resolution. The Mayor said that one complaint, by one individual had cost the taxpayer £4500. Cllr Bowman asked if the external auditor would refuse this as vexatious and the Clerk said that a future challenge of the same nature could well be refused for that reason by them. The Clerk was asked to post this on the website. **Resolved** that the actions highlighted were agreed.

188/24 Arrangements for Celebrating the achievements of individuals and groups in the Town. Upon the proposal of Cllr Telford, it was **resolved** to hold an annual event, details of which to be confirmed later.

189/24 Community Led Plan. Upon the proposal of Cllr Bridgman, it was **resolved** to form a working group of councillors, organisations and the public to start the process of creating a plan. Councillors that wished to be involved were invited to attend at 6pm, before the next meeting on 18th December, so that they could discuss ideas of how the group would be formed and their terms of reference, prior to the Council meeting starting at 7pm, when they could put forward their suggestions.

190/24 Budget Report and Virements. The Clerk went through the budget position and explained the required virements. **Resolved** that the recommended virements are approved.

191/24 Draft Budget for 2025/2026. The Clerk presented the first draft of the budget for the next year and asked that councillors look through the spreadsheet and let her have any proposed amendments. The budget would be amended in December and finalised in January.

192/24 Extension to meeting. **Resolved** to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

193/24 Payments for Approval. **Resolved** to approve the payments.

194/24 To Note Pre-approved Payments Made. **Resolved** to note the payments

195/24 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- St Helen's allotments. There was a site meeting scheduled for 25th November to look at possible work required on the riverbank. Cllrs Bridgman, Malloy and Samson would attend.
- Domain Name. 3 options for the new domain name were offered and councillors preferred cockermouthtowncouncil.gov.uk

196/24 Councillor Matters.

- Cllr Telford said that the lights on Joe's walk were going up. Disabled parking in Wilko – cars must register at the machine.
- Cllr Bowman would like a discussion about using the Capital Reserve.
- Cllr Malloy said there was restrictions on what the reserve could be spent on.

197/24 Date of next meeting. Confirmed as Wednesday 18th December 2024.

21.11 Meeting closed.