

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermonth Town Council held in the council chamber,
Town Hall, Cockermonth on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes
Councillor Catherine Bell
Councillor Chris Bridgman
Councillor Julie Laidlow
Councillor Jim Samson
Councillor Gillian Telford

Councillor Howard Beanland
Councillor Marion Bowman
Councillor Isabel Burns
Councillor David Malloy
Councillor Alan Smith
Councillor Richard Watson (Mayor)

Cumberland Councillors Andrew Semple, Helen Tucker

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Clerk

Members of the public: Five

19:00 Meeting opened.

221/24 Apologies None.

222/24 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 18th December 2024. Resolved to approve the minutes as a correct record.

223/24 Declarations of interest None

224/24 Mayors Announcements. The Mayor had attended the Carols Round the Tree Event on 24th December. He had neglected to mention last month that he had attended a concert by the Castlegate singers which was very good. Cllr Laidlow said that she was disappointed that more councillors hadn't attended the Carols Round the Tree Event.

225/24 Guest Speakers. Mark Fryer had been invited but had not been able to attend.

226/24 Reports from Cumberland Councillors

- Cllrs Semple and Tucker had submitted a joint report.
- Cllr Semple (Cockermonth South) explained that the buses were being looked at and nothing could be spent until the bus survey was completed. It would cost £100,000 to run the service and that sort of funding was not available. He said it was important for people to attend the event to be held on Friday. Cllrs expressed frustration that they had not received the information earlier. Cllr Semple said that there may be things that Cumberland Council could help with, but it may not be until the beginning of March. They may need to work with different providers.

- Cllr Burns said that there were several potholes that kept coming back.
- Cllr Malloy asked if there was a report to justify the footpath still being closed by the Old Court House. Cllr Semple would ask Karl Melville for information.
- Cllr Smith had reported a number of issues on the roads and was pleased that he could see work starting already. Cllr Semple said that they are quick to react.
- Cllr Laidlow said that money had been wasted on the Old Court House. Cllr Semple explained that the owner would be responsible for the costs.
- Cllr Tucker said that the resurfacing of the roads had been originally planned for the school holidays but was now imminent. The scaffolding on the Old Court House had been done by the owner, not Cumberland Council.

227/24 Public participation.

- A member of the public spoke about the Sidings development. There had been sightings of red squirrels on the site, and she felt that the ecology report was flawed. They had not followed recommendations and the correct methodology in producing the report.
- A second member of the public spoke about the Sidings development. She spoke about protection of the habitat and the arboriculturist's report. 42 trees were to be felled and a large number would be coppiced. Some trees would be replaced, but there was no management plan in place and the replacements could take 50-100 years to mature.
- A third member of the public spoke about the Sidings development. He explained the history of the ecology surveys and the difference between them. He said that none of the surveys were independent as they had all been provided by the applicant. He felt that the Council should chose the company to carry out the survey and this should be paid for by the applicant.

228/24 Planning

Councillor Semple left the meeting.

1. **FUL/2024/0107 Resolved** to recommend refusal based on the points previously raised. S106 funding for recreational facilities for young people and/or public transport links should be requested if permission is granted.
2. **HOU/2024/0188 Resolved** to recommend approval.
3. **FUL/2023/0088 Resolved** to recommend refusal on a number of reasons including ecology report, now a greenfield site, out of proportion for the site, lack of biodiversity gain. Cllrs Telford & Beanland were authorised to represent the Council at the planning meeting if the opportunity was available.

229/24 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. Resolved to note the schedule as received.

230/24 Climate Emergency Group. There had been a meeting on January 7th. The Chair had submitted a written report. The Clerk would pass details of the Council's energy contract to Cllr Beanland for him to seek quotes for renewal from green sources. Cllr Barnes said that fruit trees could be planted which would mean that the canopy was low and not affecting views, and also would provide food.

231/24 Hand Dryer Service Contract. Resolved to not renew the contract and use local tradesmen as required.

232/24 Bus Matters.

- **Bus Survey - Resolved** that Councillors would complete the survey individually and promote it to residents.
- **Letter to Cumberland Council - Resolved** that the Clerk would try to get the usage figures to help inform a letter.
- **Lakes to Sea –** A request for interim funding would be made, based on a figure given from Stagecoach.

233/24 Leasing and preparation of office space. Resolved To advertise the offices through Carigiet Cowen. **Resolved** to budget for up to £8000 for preparatory work required, funds to be found from savings from other Town Hall budgets.

234/24 Budget for 2025/26. Resolved To change the budget line called footpaths to environmental improvements to widen the scope of use. **Resolved** To approve the budget. At the request of Cllr Burns a recorded vote was taken. For: Cllrs Barnes, Bridgman, Telford, Watson, Bowman, Beanland and Samson. Against: Nil. Abstentions: Cllrs Burns, Smith, Malloy, Laidlow & Bell.

235/24 Precept for 2025/26. Resolved to agree a precept of £365,386, a reduction of around 2.9% on the previous year.

236/24 Payments for Approval. Resolved to approve the payments.

237/24 To Note Pre-approved Payments Made. the payments were noted.

238/24 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- The vandalism of the public toilets was discussed and an item related to security would be added to the next agenda.
- Twinning – a formal committee would be established to improve communications problems. The committee would be responsible for its own budget. The Clerk would draft the terms of reference for approval at the next meeting. **Resolved** that the Committee members would be Cllrs Burns, Telford, Bridgman and Watson.

239/24 Councillor Matters.

- Cllr Samson said that there was a meeting on 29th January to discuss the Boundary Review and there would be an item on the February agenda to agree the Council's response.
- Cllr Telford had attended the new Chair Training through CALC and had found it useful.
- Cllr Bridgman had received information on the Community Led Plan and there was funding available. It would be March before the meeting would happen.

240/24 Date of next meeting. Confirmed as Wednesday 19th February 2025.

21.15 Meeting closed.

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