

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the council chamber, Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 18th December 2024 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 Councillor Andy Semple

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Clerk

Guest Speakers, Phil Campbell, Peter Sapsford & John Dent

Members of the public: Nil

19:00 Meeting opened.

198/24 Welcome. The Mayor welcomed Cllr Smith back to the Council and congratulated him on his election win.

199/24 Apologies Cumberland Councillor Helen Tucker had sent apologies.

200/24 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 20th November 2024. Resolved to approve the minutes as a correct record.

201/24 Declarations of interest None

202/24 Mayors Announcements. The Mayor had judged the window competition with Joe Murray from the Chamber of Trade. He had attended the 50th Anniversary dinner of the 41 club. He had given out the prizes to the winners of the children's Christmas competitions and they had drawn the winning tickets for the raffle. All prizes had now been collected. He had gone to a service at St Michael's church Workington, which was part of a fundraiser for West Cumberland Hospice at Home. Deputy Mayor, Cllr Telford, had attended the carol concert at All Saints School.

203/24 Guest Speakers – Civic Trust. Phil Campbell explained the history of the Civic Trust and how they linked together as a national network of Trusts. They were passionate about maintaining the character of the Town and often commented on planning applications. They were keen to be involved in the Community Led Plan. John Dent said that they held lectures in the URC which were becoming very popular. Cllrs Laidlow & Telford commended them for their good works. Cllr Beanland asked if they had done work related to the conservation area. Phil Campbell confirmed that they had. They were thanked for their contribution to the meeting.

204/24 Reports from Cumberland Councillors

- Cllr Semple (Cockermouth South) gave some projected figures related to the boundary review. He recommended that people respond to the consultation on this, and also to the consultation on the budget review.
- The current TRO review was covering the Lakes to Sea Community Panel area. Cllr Burns raised the issue of the taxi rank on Main Street being too big and said that there were only three items on the review for Cockermouth, which she thought was disgraceful. Cllr Smith said that the Town needed a TRR which had been promised, but never materialised. He complained that yellow lines and zebra crossings were wearing away and the Town needed a review as soon as possible. Cllr Semple advised that all those matters could be reported online and done now. The Clerk would send a list of matters raised to Cllr Semple after the meeting. Cllr Burns raised an issue with safety and said a parking space should be removed at the end of Wordsworth Terrace. Cllr Beanland said that the Council should have received feedback as to why some of the suggestions made had not been actioned. Cllr Bell said that the bottom of Market Place was a dangerous junction as it was impossible to see clearly up Castlegate. Cllr Laidlow queried the disabled bays in Windmill Lane.
- Cllr Smith asked about the bus investment, he said that we needed a direct route to Maryport. Cllr Burns said that there was one, but the Town bus service was a concern. Cllr Semple said that he would contact Denise Rollo to check the status of the service.

205/24 Public participation. None.

206/24 Planning

1. **LBC/2024/0044 Resolved** to recommend approval.

207/24 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. Resolved to note the schedule as received.

208/24 Climate Emergency Group. They had met on 28th November and agreed to reach out to schools to see what they were doing. Cllr Barnes was reaching out to councils in the south to discuss how they were managing roadside verges. They would meet again on 7th January.

209/24 Community Led Plan Cllr Bridgman said that the group would like to hold a public meeting towards the end of February. They asked the staff to send invites to local groups and organisations, asking them to come along, and also advertising on

social media and possibly in the press. Cllr Bridgman would ask an advisor to attend who could help guide them.

210/24 External Auditor's Conclusion of 2022-23 accounts. Resolved to note the report as received and the following points raised and actions in place.

Points Raised:

1. Sections 1 & 2 of the annual return had been listed under the same minute number; it was recommended that a different minute number was used.
2. The total reserves were quite low.

Actions in Place

1. Separate minute numbers have been used since 19th June 2024, which was for the 2023-24 accounts. (minutes 029/24 & 030/24).
2. A strategy for rebuilding reserves was agreed at the meeting on 19th June 2024, minute 028/24.

211/24 Hand Washer/dryer contract for Main Street Toilets. The Council considered that the increase in the service charge was quite high, so asked the Clerk to seek alternative quotes.

212/24 Response to TRO proposals. This was covered earlier in the meeting. The Clerk would feed back any comments to the Cumberland Councillors and a further response may be considered at the January meeting.

213/24 Cumberland Council Ward Boundary Review. Cllr Samson explained the current review process and suggested that the Council should agree a response to the consultation. It was agreed that Cllr Samson would circulate a date for councillors to meet as a working group and formulate a response to be approved by the Council at either the January or February meetings.

214/24 Proposed amendments to the draft budget.

- Cllr Laidlow said that Memorial Gardens needed play equipment for younger children.
- Cllr Smith queried the Council's ability to make grants. The Clerk explained that the Council could make grants to properly constituted organisations, but not to individuals.
- Cllr Malloy queried the budget for footpaths. Cllr Beanland explained that he would like to improve footpaths; although not all in the ownership of the Town Council, the Council had the power to maintain them, but no duty to do so. Cllrs Burns, Malloy and Smith all stated that Cumberland were paid to maintain the footpaths, so the Town Council should not be doing the work, or taxpayers would be paying twice.

- Any other suggestions should be sent to the Clerk in good time for the January meeting when the budget would be finalised.
- Cllr Smith queried why the budget for the TIC costs had dropped from £3500 to zero. The Clerk explained that was the TIC projected income from the sale of small souvenirs which would not continue when the library was back under the control of Cumberland Council. He queried where the TIC would go and the Clerk responded that the staff and their function would remain the same within the library, similar to Silloth that provides a TIC service, the only change would be that they would no longer sell those items.

215/24 Payments for Approval. Resolved to approve the payments.

216/24 To Note Pre-approved Payments Made. Resolved to note the payments

217/24 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

218/24 Leases, tenancies and maintenance of buildings.

The Clerk had circulated a confidential report detailing the proposed new rents and leases, and expanded on various maintenance needs. **Resolved** That the Clerk should draw up the leases for the tenants as agreed. Other matters to be brought back to the January meeting.

219/24 Date of next meeting. Confirmed as Wednesday 15th January 2025.

220/24 Councillor Matters.

- Cllr Bell asked if there was any development with Wilko's. Nobody was aware of anything. Cllr Malloy had emailed but had no response.
- Cllr Burns asked about the Old Court House. It was agreed that the Clerk would invite Cllr Fryer to come to the next meeting or send a report to update us.

21.02 Meeting closed.