

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the council chamber,  
Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes

Councillor Catherine Bell

Councillor Chris Bridgman

Councillor David Malloy (Mayor)

Councillor Alan Smith

Councillor Richard Watson

Councillor Howard Beanland

Councillor Marion Bowman

Councillor Julie Laidlow

Councillor Jim Samson

Councillor Gillian Telford

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Clerk

Mrs Amy Jeffrey – Administration Assistant

Members of the public: 3

19:00 Meeting opened.

**028/25 Apologies** Cllr Burns had a prior commitment.

**029/25 To approve the minutes of the annual council meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025.**  
**Resolved** to approve the minutes.

**030/25 Declarations of interest** Cllr Telford declared an interest in one of the planning applications.

**031/25 Exclusion of press and public. Resolved** to exclude the press and public from item 21 due to commercial sensitivity and 22 due to legal matters.

**032/25 Mayor's Announcements.** He had attended the Big Barbecue at Mayfield School which was fantastic. They had opened a new common room and said that they were really enjoying being in Cockermouth.

**033/25 Reports from Cumberland Councillors.** Cllr Semple had sent apologies. The Clerk had received a number of email updates. Cllr Tucker was pressing regarding the trees on Main Street. Cumberland Highways were seeking a quote to crown raise all of them. They were due to send somebody to look at the branch over the bus shelter on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Cllr Laidlow said that the traffic lights by Gallowbarrow and Mitchells were hidden by branches. The Clerk would report. Cllr Semple had reported that the yellow lines previously reported were now on the Highways list to be done. He was chasing the Mayo Park sign, which was the responsibility of the building control team. The silt on the Double Mills bridge should have already been removed. Cllr Smith said that he had seen in the press that the local MP had been involved in the Old Court House and he asked the Clerk to write to Cllr Tucker asking what he could do if it was a Cumberland Council problem. Cllr Bowman said that

there were ongoing problems in the Double Mills/Harris Park area which she would continue to chase.

### **034/25 Public participation.**

1. A question had been received from Mrs Wendy Sanders, which was addressed to the Clerk.

*Please could the Clerk explain the reasons why the Deputy Mayor for 2024/2025 Gillian Telford was not*

*a) appointed Mayor for 2025/2026 as is the usual custom. Looking back at last year's AGM, the minutes simply say, 'to elect the Mayor' and there is no proposer, and no seconder recorded. The agenda for the AGM in 2023 says exactly the same 'to elect the mayor' and*

*b) what are the rules for the nomination of a Mayor, in terms of the amount of notice that has to be given prior to the meeting, where the appointment appears to have simply been 'ratified' at previous AGMs? In most organisations I am involved with, you are not normally allowed to make a 'last minute' nomination on the night. Usually something as important as this would require at least one week's notice to the Clerk. Is this not the case for Cockermouth Town Council?' Could I have a copy of the constitution?*

*c) could the reasons behind the surprise decision to nominate an alternative name be explained?*

#### **Clerk's response:**

##### **a) The reasons why Gillian Telford was not appointed Mayor for 2025/2026 as is the usual custom.**

Although it has been traditional in Cockermouth that the Deputy Mayor was elected as Mayor in the following year (subject to re-election in an election year), this remains a democratic process and is always subject to a vote on the night. This year a second person was nominated, Cllr Malloy, and when votes were taken, Cllr Malloy received more votes than Cllr Telford, so was therefore duly elected as Mayor.

There is no legal requirement to minute who was the proposer and seconder for the position of Mayor, it is generally reliant on the Clerk's individual style if they are or not. If the Mayor is elected unopposed, it is not something I would normally minute, however as the office was contested this year, for transparency I minuted the names. I have checked my notes of last year's meeting which indicate that Cllr Watson was nominated by Cllr Bridgman and seconded by Cllr Bowman, with no other nominations. The link for the 2023 minutes should now be working. These minutes were produced by the previous Clerk and their preference was for minuting the names of the proposer and seconder, even if the position was uncontested.

**b) What are the rules for the nomination of Mayor, what notice has to be given prior to the meeting.**

No notice of nominations needs to be given. Any serving councillor can be nominated on the night.

**c) Could the reasons behind the surprise decision to nominate an alternative name be explained.**

No reasons need to be given for a nomination, and as none were provided to me, I am unable to respond to this part of the question.

The constitution is the Council's Standing Orders.

Mrs Sanders in response, said that she represents the church and community and felt that many people's trust and opinion of the Council had been destroyed. She still wished to ask why the decision was made at the last minute and why the deputy mayor had not been given any notice.

Cllr Telford said that she felt it was a callous way to do business. Mrs Sanders asked that the Council reconsider the standing order for next year, so that at least a week's notice had to be given.

2. A member of the public spoke in support of agenda item 12. He had attended a meeting 6 years ago and felt unwelcome. He had heard that the Council was now proactive and came back to the April meeting but found that he was still looking at the backs of councillors. He had raised this in the annual Town meeting too. He asked for more than a trial and a better solution than the one currently being looked at.

Cllr Smith proposed that agenda item 12 be heard next and all agreed.

**035/25 Rearrangement of chairs at Town Council meetings.** Cllr Telford explained that members sometimes needed to spread out with papers and laptops. She thought that by removing some chairs from one side of the table, most councillors could sit so that they were facing or side-on to the public. Cllr Beanland suggested an amendment to approve rather than trial, but it was not seconded. Cllr Smith suggested that members stand when speaking. **Resolved** that the Council trials the minor rearrangement of chairs for a period of three months, and members to stand to speak if they are able.

### **036/25 Planning**

- **CAT/2025/0023 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **FUL/2025/0089 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **LBC/2025/0017 Resolved** to recommend approval.

## **037/25 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. None**

### **038/25 Climate Emergency Group**

- **Isel Road Play Area.** Cllr Bowman said that the dead tree was one of many Ash trees along Isel Road that looked to be dead. Cllr Barnes said that Ash dieback was prevalent in the area.
- **Greyrigg Play Area.** Cllr Beanland had visited the area with Cllr Watson. They had been approached by different people with opposite views on what should be done in the area. Cllr Beanland said that they would need to consult with residents.
- **Great Big Green Week.** Cllr Watson said that there had been a number of events organised by Cockermouth CAN and a number of councillors had been involved.
- The next meeting would be 7<sup>th</sup> July, 11am

**039/25 Community Led Plan.** Cllr Bridgman was waiting for a response for availability from some members for the next meeting. They wanted to raise awareness from the Cockermouth Show on 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

**040/25 Revised Financial Regulations.** Cllr Beanland proposed an amendment to 7.1 to state that 4 councillors would be signatories for the term of the council. Amendment carried. It was agreed that the bank mandate needed to be updated and the wording of the regulations reviewed again. **Resolved** to adopt the new regulations as amended. Clerk to add to July agenda to agree signatories, and arrange bank visit with IB.

**041/25 Write to the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. Resolved** to write to the commissioner highlighting agreed problem areas for speeding and requesting that a police car with a handheld device is used rather than the speed camera van, where the location is known.

**042/25 Response to electoral review.** Cllr Samson said that although not what the Council had requested, the suggestion seemed to be a good one. Cllr Beanland queried the boundaries of the Town wards. The Clerk was asked to confirm what, if any, changes were being made to the Town Council ward boundaries and bring the information back to the July meeting.

**043/25 Payments for approval. Resolved** to approve the payments.

**044/25 Pre-approved payments. Resolved** to note the schedule of payments. Cllr Beanland asked that the phone contract is checked.

**045/25 Clerk's Report.** The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- The Clerk had asked the Chamber of trade to keep an eye on the planters in dry spells. Cllr Malloy would check that the reservoirs had water.
- CCTV – the MOU would be returned.
- Quiet Lane Project – to invite them to a future meeting.
- Bike and skate park. Councillors generally did not think this was the right location but had no objection to them carrying out the survey.
- Cllr Smith asked that the CCTV for the public toilets be considered urgently.

**046/25 Councillor Matters.**

- Cllr Telford wished to send a letter of thanks to a member of the public who had planted flowers in beds outside of Lloyds motors.
- Cllr Telford gave feedback on her trip to San Sebastian for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Europe Prize. She had offered to go into Cockermouth School to talk to pupils about the conference.
- Cllr Telford shared her personal feelings regarding not being elected mayor.
- Cllr Watson spoke about the land outside of Sainsbury's. He had been in contact with the Civic Trust. Cllr Laidlow had also had people complaining in the shop. The Clerk was asked to write to the Chief Executive, with photographs attached, and to copy in the MP.
- Cllr Bowman asked if we could invite the new owners of Jennings to tell us their plans.

**047/25 Date of next meeting.** Confirmed as Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**048/25 Update on Bus Services.** The Council agreed that they were happy with the proposal that was going to tender.

**049/25 Library Transfer document. Resolved** to authorise the mayor to sign the final document on behalf of the Council. Recorded vote at the request of Cllr Smith. For: Cllrs Beanland, Bowman, Bridgman, Samson, Telford & Watson. Against: Cllrs Bell, Laidlow, Malloy & Smith. Abstained: Cllr Barnes.

21.05 Meeting closed.