

Minutes of a meeting of Cockermouth Town Council held in the council chamber, Town Hall, Cockermouth on Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes

Councillor Marion Bowman

Councillor Julie Laidlow (Chair)

Councillor Alan Smith

Councillor Richard Watson

Councillor Catherine Bell

Councillor Isabel Burns

Councillor Jim Samson

Councillor Gillian Telford

Cumberland Councillor Andrew Semple

Mrs Jane Ollerenshaw – Clerk

Mrs Amy Jeffrey – Administration Assistant

Members of the public: 1

19:00 Meeting opened.

058/25 Apologies Cllrs Beanland, Bridgman and Malloy had submitted apologies.

059/25 To approve the minutes of the council meeting of 18th June 2025. The Clerk recommended two amendments. 033/25, to include in the final sentence the location Double Mills/Harris Park. 046/25 to insert the missing wording, "Cllr Telford wished to send a letter of thanks to a member of the public who had planted flowers in" **Resolved** to approve the minutes as amended.

060/25 To receive the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting of 7th April 2025. **Resolved** to note received.

061/25 Declarations of interest None.

062/25 Exclusion of press and public. No matters required the exclusion of the press and public.

063/25 Mayor's Announcements. Cllr Malloy had sent apologies and would update at the next meeting. Cllr Laidlow, as Deputy Mayor, had attended the Children's Society Garden Trail. It had been a beautiful afternoon and there were a lot of hidden gems in the Town. She had thoroughly enjoyed it.

064/25 Reports from Cumberland Councillors. Cllr Semple said that people could contact him at any time and he would attend CTC meetings as much as possible. He had been re-elected as the Chair of Cumberland Council for the second year. Sally Landsbury was elected as the Chair of the Lakes to Sea Community Panel. He was on the Planning Committee and was now also on the Audit and Risk Committee. He was part of the working group that was looking to help develop the Cumberland

Local Plan. There was a call for sites that the Council had until January to respond to. He had spoken against the Violet Bank development, however he had declared an interest so did not have a vote. The High Street Task Force had held some meetings but nothing had happened. He thought it was important to get businesses behind it. He would forward an email and a decision would need to be taken about any action to be taken.

- Cllr Burns asked about the state of the pavements. Cllr Semple said that the flags would be replaced by Fibrus once the same flags were sourced.
- Cllr Smith asked that greenfield sites be protected around the town by the local plan. Cllr Semple said that the call for sites was an opportunity to protect those places. Cllr Telford said it would need to be an agenda item.
- Cllr Smith asked for an update on the town bus service. Cllr Semple said that there would be a service. He thought the service should be in place by around September. The Maryport to Cockermouth service was also high priority. Cllr Burns said that many people had been without a service for 5 months and the return taxi was expensive. Cllr Semple said that he would speak to the community transport people. Cllr Watson asked what would happen if there were no bids for the bus tender. Cllr Semple confirmed that Cumberland Council would provide the service if it was not commercially viable.
- Cllr Laidlow asked when the trees on Station Street would be replaced. Cllr Semple said that he would ask.
- Cllr Laidlow asked if there was any truth to the story that bin collections would be changed to three-weekly. Cllr Semple confirmed that it was not true.

Cllr Semple congratulated everyone that was involved with Cockermouth Live! as it was a brilliant weekend.

065/25 Public participation.

A member of the public said that he was disappointed that the neighbourhood plan wasn't a standing item on the agenda. Cllrs replied that the community led plan was on the agenda.

A member of the public asked how much had been saved per year by not running the library. The Clerk responded that the net reduction from the budget was approximately £70,000.

Cllr Smith said that he thought that a community led plan was needed before a town plan. Cllr Bowman said that there had been discussion around this and it had been agreed to develop a community led town plan before, hopefully, moving on to the neighbourhood plan, which holds more legal weight. Cllr Telford said that a neighbourhood plan was not dependent upon having a community led plan, and unfortunately funding had now been withdrawn for neighbourhood plans. Cllr Watson

said that a member of staff from Cumberland Council had come to speak to the Council and given extensive advice about the different plans, and with the benefit of that advice the Council had decided to create the community led plan.

066/25 Planning

- **FUL/2025/0100 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **LBC/2025/0019 Resolved** to recommend approval.
- **WTPO/2025/0020 Resolved** to recommend approval

067/25 Planning Decisions Under Delegated Authority. Noted as received.

068/25 Climate Emergency Group

- **Isel Road woodland.** Cllr Barnes had spoken to the Woodland Trust and Cockermouth School. The school may be interested in carrying out curriculum related projects in the area. Questions were raised about the insurance; this would be looked into. It was thought that the area would be too small to be of interest to the Cumbria Wildlife Trust. The Clerk was asked to write to Julie Skidmore at Cockermouth School to invite her to attend a meeting with the Council to explore options.
- **Isel Road Tree.** Cllr Barnes said that the tree in Isel Road should be heavily pruned back if it is not dead as that would help it greatly. Clerk to get a quote.
- **Greyrigg Play Area.** Cllr Bridgman had offered to create a questionnaire for residents near the site to consult on any proposed changes.
- **Land in the Laureates area.** Cllr Telford said that the area had been left to go wild but had not been properly managed and looked a mess. Cllr Barnes had offered good advice and she would approach the management company.
- Cllr Barnes wished to thank Cllr Bridgman for making comprehensive notes.

069/25 Community Led Plan. Cllr Bridgman had provided a written update that the steering group was working towards a “Visioning Day” in late Sept/early Oct. The Chief Executive of Kirkgate Arts had also joined the steering group.

070/25 Complaints Procedure. Resolved to adopt the revised complaints procedure.

071/25 Bank Signatories. Resolved that Cllrs Isabel Burns, Julie Laidlow, David Malloy and Alan Smith would remain signatories for the rest of their term of office. The Clerk, Jane Ollerenshaw, would also be added as a signatory. The Clerk to arrange an appointment at the bank with Cllr Burns to facilitate this and to review the full mandate.

072/25 Repair and servicing of the sash windows. One of the windows would require scaffolding, so the Clerk would obtain a quote. Cllr Bowman cautioned that

we should be certain that the responsibility for ordering the correct size of window rested with the contractor. **Resolved** to accept the quotation.

073/25 Finance Report. Resolved to note received the quarterly budget comparison report.

074/25 Neighbourhood Plan Funding. Cllr Telford was concerned that funding for neighbourhood planning had been stopped. **Resolved** to write to the local MP and the MHCLG expressing our disappointment that the funding has been withdrawn.

075/25 Planning and Nature. The planning and infrastructure bill had already progressed to the Lords. Cllr Bowman said that the letter would need to be more pointed for responses to different targets. **Resolved** Cllr Telford would put words together for the August meeting.

076/25 Payments for approval. Resolved to approve the payments.

077/25 Pre-approved payments. Resolved to note the schedule of payments.

078/25 Clerk's Report. The Clerk's report had been circulated.

- The Main Street toilet doors had been painted.
- A response from Tivoli regarding fossil fuels had been received and circulated.
- An enquiry to purchase a spare desk and chair had been received. Cllrs agreed to sell one.
- A response from Sainsbury's had been received. The Clerk was asked to respond to Sainsbury's to offer to share local knowledge and input into any redesign of the area.
- A response had been received from Jennings. They had offered to attend the August meeting and the Clerk was asked to write back to accept that offer.
- Service 68 was no longer going to run with the current operator from September and it was likely that there would be a short disruption, but Cllr Semple was looking to find a solution.
- Cllr Telford asked about the boundary changes. The Clerk said that she hadn't received a response from Cumberland Council, but looking at the map, the Town ward boundaries appeared to now follow the Cumberland ward boundaries.

079/25 Councillor Matters.

- Cllr Burns raised the issue of Wordsworth House. There was concern that the House would be closed. Cllr Telford said that there was a meeting on 24th and the Council might need to put forward its views before then. Cllr Bowman said that the Council had insufficient information and suggested that it writes to the National Trust, asking for more details.

- Cllr Watson had circulated a BBC article about sewage being released into the river and asked if the Council wished to take any action. Cllr Bell said that this wasn't an isolated incident. Cllr Burns suggested that we ask Cllr Malloy at the next meeting, what action the Council could take.
- Cllr Smith said that T'Gether @ 93 was experiencing financial difficulties. He would put something on the agenda for the August meeting. Cllr Bowman suggested asking them to submit a grant application.
- Cllr Telford said that there were a lot of A boards blocking the pavements on Main Street and asked Christchurch councillors to check on these. Cllr Smith asked that the Clerk writes to Cumberland council to check on tables and chairs. Cllr Bell said that the board on Station Street was dangerous because it was blocking the pavement, you couldn't get a pushchair past. Cllr Burns had received a complaint about the state of the pavement outside The Bush. The street furniture was left out all night and so the street cleaner wasn't able to clean it and the owners weren't cleaning it themselves. Councillors were unsure whether it was a requirement to take the tables and chairs inside.
- Cllr Telford asked if a thank you could be sent to Tom Speight and the organisers of Cockermouth Live! as the town was really busy last weekend. This was agreed.

080/25 Date of next meeting. Confirmed as Wednesday 20th August 2025.

20.36 Meeting closed.