

# ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 6.00p.m at the Methodist Church Hall, Aspatria.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Maxwell (Chair)

**Councillors:** Cllr K Thurlow, Cllr A Hankin, Cllr K Smith, Cllr S Edmondson, Cllr A Maxwell, Cllr A Reay, Cllr M Rose, Cllr Elaine Yates

**Also in Attendance:** Mrs K Cooper (Town Clerk), Ms S Hullock (RFO), Jack Baker (Caretaker)

**Members of the Public:** None

## Minutes

Item		Action
<b>1.02.25. Apologies:</b> To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	Cllr Ray Gregory – Holiday Cllr Barbara Blackburn – Family Commitments Cllr Jennifer Marsh – Medical	
<b>2.02.25. Mayors Announcements/Updates:</b>	<p>The official open day at Aspatria Library was to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> January however this was cancelled due to Storm Éowyn.</p> <p>On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February Cllr Ray Gregory opened the new fitness pod at Aspatria Rugby Club. The event was well attended, and the pod is thought to be a good asset to the town.</p> <p>Cllr Stephanie Maxwell and Cllr Gregory attended the Health and Wellbeing Conference in Wigton on 12<sup>th</sup> February. This event was organised by Cumberland Council.</p> <p>New and revised contracts are to be composed for both the RFO and the Clerk due to changes which have occurred, one being the Clerks extended hours of work. It was also confirmed and agreed the Clerk and the RFO claim any mileage used for all council business as neither had claimed to attend the council meetings each month. It was agreed to back date their mileage to October when the new contracts were adopted. <b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>Cllr Maxwell reminded the Councillors that the Clerk works 25 hours each week and this does not include weekends/evenings therefore the Clerk should not be contacted in the evening or at the weekend. <b>RESOLVED.</b></p> <p>Cllr Maxwell requested on behalf of the Clerk, who is going to be on holiday, if the April meeting could be moved forward by one week to 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025. All agreed.</p>	
<b>3.02.25. Declarations of Interest:</b> Members are invited to make any	None	

declarations of Pecuniary Interest or other Registerable Interest (other than those recorded on their Notification of Pecuniary Interests or other Registerable Interests) relating to any items on the agenda.		
<b>4.02.25. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025:</b>	As per item 17.01.25 of January minutes Cllr Reay thanked the Council on behalf of John Wright, the lollipop man at Richmond Hill School for the appreciation letter received. The minutes were agreed to be of a true record of the meeting. Approved and signed by the Mayor/Chair. <b>RESOLVED.</b>	
<b>5.02.25. Clerks Report:</b>	The Clerk has sent the report from the tree surgeon with supporting evidence to the council insurance company in order to make a claim for the invoice paid for felling the trees in St Mungo's Park. Ongoing. The Clerk and the Caretaker have visited the allotments at Lawson St and re-numbered all the plots. New numbers were purchased and since been erected on each plot fence. Letters have been distributed to inform tenants of 'allotment day' whereby the Clerk will be in Aspatria Library on 24 <sup>th</sup> Feb 10.30am-3pm to take payment for the allotments and complete tenancy agreements for the year. The Clerk contacted Richmond Hill School to involve their pupils with the celebration of Railway 200, a nationwide celebration for 200 years of the modern railway. The pictures to judge for the drawing competition will be collected around 10 <sup>th</sup> March. The winner of each year group (3-6) will be displayed on a banner provided by the railway committee, as arranged by the Clerk. The Clerk is enquiring about installing a defib onto the Methodist Church. The church committee have requested information on ownership, liability etc. The Clerk and RFO will respond to this. Cllr Gregory and Cllr Marsh have been asked if they would volunteer for the Cumbria Neighbourhood Policing initiative. Both agreed.	
<b>6.02.25. Public Participation:</b>	Nothing to report.	
<b>7.02.25. Highways:</b>	Nothing to report.	
<b>8.02.25. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors:</b> Councillor Kevin Thurlow	Cllr Thurlow informed the meeting the new school crossing patrol lights at Richmond Hill School have now been installed but they require programming.	
<b>9.02.25. Financial Matters:</b>	i) Expenditure and Income Schedule for January 2025:- <b>RESOLVED</b> that the expenditure of £14,158.28 and	

	<p>income of £20,095.00 be approved. Members also approved the additional invoices for payment:-  S Maxwell - £11.20 Reimbursement of mileage and parking for Cumberland Council conference in Wigton  Aspatria Farmers - £48.40 Various materials  Gwen Atkinson - £2,200.00 Senior Citizens Christmas Party 2024 (150 people)  Gwen Atkinson - £175.00 Civic Service (35 people)  NPower - £122.59 Toilet Block Electricity (1.1.25 - 31.1.25)  LR &amp; JA Allen - £111.51 Van Fuel  Allerdale Borough Council - £316.80 Inspection of Play Areas in 2022  Cumberland Council - £144.00 Annual Inspection of Play Areas</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31st January 2025: -  <b>RESOLVED</b> that the circulated Bank Reconciliation Statements be confirmed and accepted as a true record noting the three reserves.</p> <p>(iii) Internal Audit Requirements  Review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit Arrangements 2024/25:-  The RFO circulated a report which covered the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal audit. The RFO explained that this review is an integral part of the continually improving governance and accountability arrangements of the Council.</p> <p>Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26:-  Part of the process for the Internal Audit operation is the adoption of an Internal Audit Plan. The RFO circulated the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 and explained the areas contained therein.</p> <p>Appointment of the Internal Auditor:-  The RFO explained the background and experience of the current Internal Auditor used by the Council and sought approval for the reappointment of Mrs. Airey as Internal Auditor for the 2025/26 financial year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the internal audit arrangements are considered effective and are to be used by the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2024/25.</li> <li>- the areas proposed within the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan are accepted.</li> <li>- Mrs Jean Airey be reappointed as the Internal Auditor for the Council's 2024/2025 and 2025/26 financial year.</li> </ul> <p>(iv) Update of the Financial Regulations – Sections 5.18, 6.7 and 6.9  The RFO presented a paper giving an overview of the main changes to the Council's Financial Regulations</p>	
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	<p>with regards to increasing the delegated expenditure limits to the Clerk where public safety is at risk as well as setting a delegated expenditure limit for the Council's two sub committees. The RFO requested that the amendments to the Financial Regulations be accepted and implemented.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that the amendments detailed within the report be accepted and immediately implemented with the revised Regulations being posted onto the Council's website.</p>	
<p><b>10.02.25. Parks &amp; Allotments:</b></p>	<p>Minutes were circulated to all Cllrs following the sub-committee meeting. These were signed by Cllr Reay as Chair.</p> <p>The outdoor gym has been ordered following the location being confirmed within St Mungos Park.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Allotments – i. The landowner of Lawson St allotments has contacted the Clerk in order to agree a lease between herself and the council as tenants. It was agreed by both parties this has continued for too long and following several mistakes on previous communication from Brockbanks Solicitors, the owner is to send a revised copy of the lease. Cllr Thurlow suggested his solicitor could help us investigate the lease and advise us on the next step. Ongoing.</p> <p>ii. The first plot at Outgang Road allotments is currently unoccupied and it was suggested this could possibly be made into an entrance into the park to enable access to the Caretakers compound.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>The strings of lights which were originally erected on the changing rooms at Christmas have now been securely fixed onto the building and will remain there. The lights help to illuminate the park area and will be on between Oct-March each year. <b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>The Caretaker requested a new jacket as the current one is torn. He was reminded to wear safety boots and work trousers which are provided.</p> <p>The council van is booked into the garage on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March for a service and MOT. <b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>The remote council van key has broken and is in need of repair. The Clerk retrieved a quote for £150 for the work to be carried out. The Cllrs agreed to acquire extra quotes. Ongoing.</p> <p>Following the inspections of both St Mungo's Park and Victoria Park it was found two zip wire seats were required, some components on the tyre swing at St Mungo's Park needed replacing and also new seats and paint for the swings in Victoria Park were needed. Cllr Alan Maxwell proposed we purchase these, seconded by Cllr Reay. <b>RESOLVED.</b></p> <p>Cllr Edmondson raised concerns for the safety of the fence located at Victoria Park. The fence was not secure and in her opinion needed inspected as soon as possible with the possibility of repair work being carried out to make this safe.</p> <p>Cllr Reay had noticed the milk churns at West Street</p>	

	<p>were rusty and needed some repair work. The Caretaker was asked to remove them and try to restore them. Ongoing.</p> <p>Cllr Reay suggested we no longer purchase winter flowers as the weather of late has just destroyed them. All agreed. <b>RESOLVED.</b></p>	
<b>11.02.25. Equality &amp; Diversity Policy:</b>	<p>The policy was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The Equality and Diversity Policy was adopted at this meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and will be updated on the council website. <b>RESOLVED.</b></p>	
<b>12.02.25. Defib at Methodist Church:</b>	<p>As per the Clerks report, the Clerk is trying to ascertain a defibrillator. The defib would be installed at the Methodist Church. The Clerk has requested permission, but the church committee need further information. It was agreed the Clerk and the RFO would look into this. Ongoing.</p>	
<b>13.02.25. Post Office and Royal Mail post box:</b>	<p>The Clerk visited the post office in Wigton to request the mobile van visit Aspatria each week due to the post office no longer being open. The Clerk is also in contact with the Royal Mail regarding a replacement large letter post box being installed in the town. Ongoing.</p>	
<b>14.02.25. Christmas lights removal:</b>	<p>The Council all agreed last year to change the towns Christmas lights which meant no longer relying on residents or businesses to power our lights. The strings of lights however are still attached to several buildings throughout the town. The Clerk contacted Eric Nicholson who quoted £624 + VAT to remove all the strings of lights. It was proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Maxwell to go ahead. <b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>Cllr Kevin Thurlow leaves at 19.35pm</p>	
<b>15.02.25. Town Events:</b>	<p>Minutes were circulated from the sub-committee meeting and signed by Cllr Maxwell as Chair.</p>	
<b>16.02.25. Town Council Appreciation Scheme:</b>	<p>The Clerk mentioned a letter of appreciation should be sent to Adam Thwaite for his help at Queen St car park following Storm Éowyn in January. Adam helped clear rubbish which had blown all over the area. Cllr Hankin suggested a letter should be sent to Harry Ward for chopping and removing the tree at Brayton Road following the storm, as the road was blocked due to the tree. Letters of thanks and appreciation will be sent. <b>RESOLVED.</b></p> <p>Jack Baker leaves at 19.40pm</p>	
<b>17.02.25. Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications:</b> To receive a schedule of correspondence, notices and publications received since the last meeting.		

<b>18.02.25. Applications for Development:</b>	Applicant: Sarah Edmondson. Ref: HOU/2025/0007. Proposed conversion and enlargement of first floor store to create additional accommodation.	
<b>19.02.25. Items submitted by members:</b>	None	
<b>20.02.25. Items for the next meeting:</b>	Milk churns Van key repair Railway 200 drawing competition	
<b>21.02.25. Confidential Items:</b>	Caretaker Review and Pay Increase is minuted separately and only circulated and viewed by Councillors due to confidentiality.	
<b>22.02.25. The next meeting of Aspatria Town Council will take place on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6pm.</b>		

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

