

ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 31st May 2023 at 6.00p.m.
at the Methodist Church Hall, Aspatria.**

PRESENT: Councillor A Maxwell (Chair)

Councillors: Cllr S Maxwell, Councillor A Reay, Cllr D McRea, Cllr R Gregory, Cllr D Harland, Cllr K Smith, Cllr M Rose, Cllr A Hankin, Cllr K Thurlow.

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

Annual Parish Minutes

Item		Action
1. Apologies: To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	None	Clerk to note.
2. Removal of delegated powers:	Due to the recent events within the council and the election process, the Town Clerk and the RFO adopted delegated powers until the first meeting of the newly elected councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Smith and Cllr Gregory to remove the powers of delegation, and this was then seconded by Cllr Hankin.	
3. Mayors announcements/updates:	<p>Cllr Alan Maxwell welcomed both the previous and new councillors to the meeting. He explained, members of the public who wish to become a councillor could have applied in May, which possibly could have resulted in an election or via an application to the Clerk. Cllr Maxwell introduced each councillor, Town Clerk and the RFO to the new councillors. Cllr Maxwell approached Cllr Wilkinson on the reasons of him joining the council. Cllr Wilkinson has family in the town and wishes to give something back to the community. Cllr Harland has previous experience in politics and has been a councillor previous to this. He believes he will be an asset to the council due to the skills and experience he has gained throughout the years and is willing to assist the Clerk with updating the policies on the council website. Cllr Maxwell reminded the councillors, a fee is paid to CALC for and help and guidance which the Clerk and RFO feel is necessary. The Clerk is currently contracted to 18 hours per week and the RFO is 10 hours per week. Councillors were asked, unless it is an emergency, contact should not be made to the Clerk and the RFO at weekends and holidays.</p> <p>Cllr Gregory gave thanks to the Clerk and the RFO for the recent hard work and extra hours worked in resolving the issue with the election process, all were in agreeance. Cllr Maxwell stated the council meeting scheduled for 16th May could not take place due to the council having no councillors at that time, however a</p>	

	<p>meeting had to be held within fourteen days of the election. Thanks was given to the election officer at Allerdale House for their help and assistance over a difficult period and for hosting the briefing meeting for any interested councillors.</p> <p>Appraisals for council staff, the Town Clerk, RFO and the Town Caretaker were held on 28th April 2023.</p> <p>The Kings Coronation was celebrated by purchasing a tree and a plaque to be placed at Brandraw car park. The existing tree within the cage at the area had died and had to be removed. The Town Clerk and the Town Caretaker visited Atkinsons who kindly donated a flagstone to replace the tree. Following this, the Clerk brought it to the councillors attention the flagstones are all in disrepair and need replacing. The Clerk received a quote from Atkinsons, which was at a reduced cost to the council. The Clerk is enquiring on the ownership of the land and obtaining quotes for the work to be carried out.</p> <p>The town flowers are on order, 20 hanging baskets and 12 mangers to be erected on Castle Terrace. These will be watered regularly by the Town Caretaker. To assist with the watering the caretaker has asked to be provided with a metal hook to lift the baskets down to be watered safely. All agreed.</p> <p>Extra flowers are also required for the pots around the town including the Viking Ship. Town Clerk was struggling to find a supplier however Cllr Gregory made a suggestion of the Lakes Centre in Cockermouth as they have availability. Cllr Smith propped the flowers be purchased from the Lakes Centre, this was seconded by Cllr Gregory. All agreed. Permission wasn't granted for the bench to be installed at the Masonic Hall, the Town Clerk will write a letter of apology to the Masonic for this.</p>	<p>MB to get quote</p> <p>TC</p>
<p>4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 17th May 2022</p>	<p>Cllr Maxwell enquired if the cleaner of Brandraw Toilets was being paid the correct amount due to the minimum wage increase. The RFO advised the minimum wage is for employees only and Mr Thurlow is contracted therefore this does not apply.</p>	
<p>5. Review of the year – Mayor’s Report:</p>	<p>Cllr Alan Maxwell gave thanks to the Deputy Mayor, Councillors, Town Clerk and the RFO for a successful year within the town. This year we have gained new councillors, Cllr McRea, Cllr Gregory and Cllr Hankin. Sadly we had three resignations from Cllr King, Cllr Barker and Cllr Blackburn thanks was given for all their input.</p> <p>In August we organised the Senior Citizens trip to Liverpool, this was well attended and enjoyed by all. The summer floral displays throughout the town unfortunately did not last as long as expected due to an issue with the watering of the flowers.</p> <p>In November we held the Remembrance Parade, whereby a wreath was placed at the Memorial gates and was followed by a service at St Kentigerns Church.</p>	

	<p>This year we purchased some extra strings of Christmas lights for the town which were placed in various locations. The light switch on took place on 4th December with an event held at Beacon Hill School, thanks was given to the school and to Dreamscheme for all their help. The window lighting draw took place again this year with several prizes to be won.</p> <p>Also in December, the Senior Citizens treat took place at the Masonic Hall. Again, this was well attended. Queen Street car park had some resurfacing work completed and additional parking bays were made. The council decided at this moment in time to freeze any grant applications but this will be reviewed on a regular basis, on looking at our finance and with the advice from our RFO.</p> <p>The Lawson Street allotments have had work carried out, whereby larger plots were split into smaller plots of land therefore more tenants were able to rent the allotments which reduced the number of people on the waiting list.</p> <p>The council gained ownership of the Brandraw toilet block on 1st June this year, these are cleaned and maintained by Cllr Kevin Thurlow.</p> <p>In June we planted a tree and a plaque was erected in the Memorial Garden to mark the Queen's Jubilee. A lunch to celebrate was held in the Community Centre. Sadly the Queen passed away on 8th September. Several Civic Services were held this year for the Mayors of each area, Cockermouth's was on 3rd July, Wigton was 17th July, Allerdale was 14th August, Aspatria was 11th September, Judges Service was held at Carlisle Cathedral on 5th October. St Kentigerns Church, Aspatria held the Ordination of Curate Matt Richards in July, Cllr Maxwell (Mayor) and Cllr Maxwell (Deputy Mayor) were in attendance.</p> <p>In June, we had the free family gala day held at the Rugby Club, Cllr Maxwell (Mayor) attended and judged the fancy dress competition.</p> <p>Library modifications to form Aspatria Community Hub was to begin in October and be completed by March 23, however due to unforeseen circumstances the work is now to begin in June 23 and completed by November 23.</p> <p>Allerdale Borough Council made the decision to remove wheelie bins from Brough Street as this was deemed unsafe for their employees. Residents are now to use bin liners and place them in the four blue bins provided on Queen Street car park.</p> <p>Aspatria has been the victim to several incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour, which in some cases seem to be seasonal, once the weather improves. Incidents are continually reported to the police.</p> <p>In April this year, Allerdale Council ceased and formed into Cumberland Council.</p> <p>The Lawson Monument and the Brae Lamp have both had worked carried out to clean them and improve their appearance. The tree which was located behind the monument has been removed as this was causing</p>	
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	<p>issues with the wall at the Esso garage.</p> <p>A meeting was held by the GDF Community Partnership to inform the Councillors of their plans regarding the nuclear waste disposal site. Aspatria was removed as one of the areas for consideration in April 23.</p> <p>Ongoing work has been carried out via Unblock Cumbria in St Mungos Park to try and rectify the issues with the drains, cameras have been placed underground to investigate, this is ongoing.</p> <p>June last year, Aspatria Park Play commenced. This is a group ran by a playleader every Saturday morning at St Mungos Park and is free to all. Aspatria Town Council received funding to help run this programme for 12 months. Aspatria has the 2nd largest attendance at the group in the country and the 1st within Cumbria. Memorial Plaques for the miners who lost their lives in the Aspatria coal pits have been purchased from Lakeland Laser Print and displayed, one being in the Memorial Garden and the other on the pit cart at Lawson Street.</p> <p>To mark the Kings Coronation on the 6th May, the council purchased and planted a new tree which is situated at the Brandraw car park. A plaque has also been erected.</p> <p>Two new benches have been installed in the town, these were installed by Tom Gardner of TG Building. They can be found in St Mungos Park and near the Masonic Hall.</p> <p>On the 18th December the Methodist Church held a carol service for the town, Cllr Alan Maxwell and Cllr Stephanie Maxwell were in attendance.</p> <p>Cllr Alan Maxwell attended First Milk on 15th December for the opening of the new production line. Cllr Maxwell was most impressed and informed the December meeting the site was a credit to First Milk.</p> <p>Jubilee Walk footpath has had work carried out to try and reduce the flooding on the path. This is ongoing and flooding still seems to occur.</p> <p>The Cumberland FA met with the Town Clerk, and several Councillors at St Mungos Park to discuss the options of improving the pitch. A pitch report is to be sent to the Clerk for action, this is ongoing.</p> <p>The Town Clerk and our new web designer have constructed a new council website, along with a new email address. The site is much more accessible than the previous site and is updated regularly.</p> <p>The council address has also been updated as of January 23 due to the Clerk moving home. The new address can be found on our website.</p> <p>Council elections were to take place on 4th May but due to several issues including the email change and the address change no councillors had applied for the council. The Town Clerk worked closely with the elections officer at Allerdale and CALC for guidance and support to resolve this issue. The nominations of election were live on 11th May with the closing date of 18th May. No election was needed therefore the</p>	
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	councillor who applied were elected uncontested.	
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Annual General Meeting

Item		Action
<p>1. Apologies: To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.</p>		
<p>2. Election of Mayor and Chairman: To elect Mayor for the ensuing council year 2023/24</p>	<p>Cllr Ray Gregory proposed Cllr Alan Maxwell should continue as Mayor, this was seconded by Cllr Karen Smith. Cllr Marie Rose proposed Cllr Stephanie Maxwell should continue as Deputy Mayor, this was seconded by Cllr Ray Gregory.</p>	
<p>3. To receive the Mayor's & Chairman's Declaration of Office:</p>	<p>Cllr Alan Maxwell and Cllr Stephanie Maxwell accepted the role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Cllr Alan Maxwell signed the acceptance of office form for the Mayor's role.</p>	
<p>4. Vacancies on Council: To co-opt any suitable candidates for the vacancies on the council.</p>	<p>The council currently has five vacancies for Councillors. Aspatria currently comprises of three wards; East, West and Central however Cumberland Council are hoping to possibly change this and make Aspatria unwarded. Cllr Stephanie Maxwell suggested the council write to Mrs Blackburn to thank her for all her input over the years as a councillor.</p>	TC
<p>5. To Appoint representatives to Parks & Allotments Committee:</p>	<p>It was decided Cllr Alan Reay was to Chair the Parks and Allotments Committee. The Committee is made up of several Councillors, Cllr Karen Smith, Cllr Marie Rose, Cllr Adam Hankin and Cllr Damon McRea. It was decided there should be a Deputy Chair for the committee. It was agreed Cllr D McRea would take this role. The Town Clerk and the Town Caretaker are also in attendance at the meetings. The Town Caretaker has reminded councillors prior to Covid regular walk-rounds occurred to inspect the parks and allotments. The Chair and the Town Clerk attend these areas frequently however it was agreed the committee would also attend the inspections.</p>	
<p>6. Declarations of Interest: Members are invited to make any 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.</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>7. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held Tuesday 25th April 2023: To authorise the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the last Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on</p>	<p>Approved.</p>	

<p>8. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Extraordinary Meeting held Tuesday 2nd May 2023: To authorise the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held 2nd May 2023.</p>	<p>Approved.</p>	
<p>9. Clerks report:</p>	<p>The Town Clerk had received an email from the developers of Aspatria Library asking for permission to fence off several parking bays, making it safe for the developments to be carried out. All were in agreeance, however any damage caused to the surface of the car park would have to be replaced at their cost.</p> <p>The Town Clerk also advised moving forward the monthly council papers will now be distributed via email. This is more cost effective, due to printing costs of the papers each month.</p> <p>Cllr Smith</p>	<p>TC to contact</p>
<p>10. Public Participation:</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p>11. Highways:</p>	<p>It was brought to the councillors attention the current state of the roads between Aspatria and Prospect and Aspatria and Arkleby. They are in disrepair and in need of resurfacing. These are both to be reported to the highways department.</p> <p>The manhole outside Aspatria Medical Centre seems to have disintegrated. This was repaired previously. Also to be reported.</p>	<p>TC</p> <p>TC</p>
<p>12. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors:</p> <p>1.1 Councillor Kevin Thurlow</p>	<p>Reports have been made regarding Queen Street car park. The public have complained there aren't enough parking bays and the disabled bays aren't wide enough. It is felt the gate on the car park which is locked is situated too far up the car park and should be moved to provide a larger piece of land for public parking.</p> <p>As the gate is locked, the Town Clerk opens the gate as requested for funerals and events, it was suggested extra keys should be issued to the church wardens and a nominated councillor to ensure the gate is open and locked as required.</p> <p>Cllr Thurlow informed the meeting there was no update on the striking of the refuse collections.</p> <p>Cumberland Council have constructed community</p>	<p>TC to contact</p>

	panels whereby several councillors from various areas meet to discuss any issues arising. A meeting is due to be held next week. Each panel is to receive funding to be spent in the councillors area. More information to follow.	
13. Financial Matters:	<p>Financial Matters:-</p> <p>(i) Expenditure and Income Schedule for April 2023:- RESOLVED that the expenditure of £5,665.11 (including VAT) and Income of £40,103.00 as detailed for April 2023 in the attached schedule be approved.</p> <p>Councillors also agreed the 2023/24 CALC/NALC Annual Subscription payment of £435.90 be paid.</p> <p>The RFO explained that as the Council have opted for Monthly PO Box Service, payment can only be made via a Direct Debit. RESOLVED Councillors agreed that a Direct Debit could be set up going forward and the relevant paperwork was signed at the meeting.</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30th April 2023:- RESOLVED that the circulated Bank Reconciliation Statement be confirmed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>The RFO answered all questions raised in relation to various payments made.</p>	
14. Council Policies:	Due to the website being updated and the election process over the previous months, the councillors are aware policies on the council website are to be updated. The Town Clerk received advice from CALC, policies can be reviewed monthly. It was suggested the councillors could review a policy at each monthly meeting to adopt and upload onto the website. Cllr Harland has offered his help to the Clerk in getting these up to date.	
15. Grant applications:	An application from the PCC of St Kentigerns Church was received to help purchase equipment for the Community Service workers to use when attending to the church yard. As the council have currently placed the grants on hold, the Town Clerk will correspond with the applicant and inform them this will be placed on our agenda at our next meeting in June.	TC
16. Allotment update:	The council received a draft lease from the solicitor of the owner of the land in which the allotments at Lawson Street reside. Several details on the draft were incorrect and no plan of the plots was included as stated. The Town Clerk contacted our insurance company regarding the insurance over the allotments and was advised the council are covered as tenants for the land, however this does not include sub-letting. It is therefore possible the allotment tenants will have to take out insurance and supply the Clerk with proof.	Ongoing

take place on Tuesday 20 th June 2023 at 6.00 p.m. at the Methodist Hall, Aspatria.		
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The meeting ended at 8.10pm

Chairman.....

Date.....

