

ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8th April 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 E Yates, Cllr B Blackburn, Cllr R Gregory, Cllr M Rose

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

Members of the Public: None

Minutes

Item		Action
1.04.25. Apologies: To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	None	
2.04.25. Mayors Announcements/Updates:	<p>The Ninja Trail open day on 31st March was a success and we believe the new equipment is already well used.</p> <p>The Great Aspatria Bake Off was held on 6th April at the Masonic Hall. Cllr Maxwell stated there wasn't as many participants as we had hoped for however the support from people coming for tea and cake was much appreciated and a small profit was made. It was suggested the event should have been advertised in the church magazine in addition to the town's noticeboards and social platforms.</p> <p>Staff appraisals for the Town Clerk and the RFO will take place on Thursday 1st May 2025.</p>	
3.04.25. 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.	None	
4.04.25. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held 18th March 2025:	The minutes were agreed to be of a true record of the meeting. Approved and signed by the Mayor/Chair. RESOLVED.	
5.04.25. Clerks Report:	The Clerk visited Richmond Hill School with the book tokens for the winners of our Railway 200 competition. RESOLVED Strings of Christmas lights were removed from	

	<p>residents' homes by a certified contractor. The Clerk had emailed the contractor due to the strings being cut and damaged on removal. The reason for this was due to many houses having extra cables fixed onto the guttering. RESOLVED</p> <p>The Memorial bench purchased for Andrew Mounsey, by his family, is to arrive shortly and is to be placed within St Mungos Park. The Clerk and Committee are to meet with the family to agree on the location.</p> <p>Aspatia Bowling Club have their open day on Saturday 12th April 2025 from 2pm. The Town Caretaker will be in attendance to receive green fees. RESOLVED</p>	
6.04.25. Public Participation:	<p>Cllr Maxwell reported there had been low water pressure once again in the town, especially in the area of West Street. The Town Clerk is to contact United Utilities yet again. Ongoing</p>	
7.04.25. Highways:	<p>Cllr Gregory informed the meeting the road from the bridge at Arkleby Mill continuing up to the corner near Toll Bar is in desperate need of repair. The Clerk stated the road had recently been closed for two weeks due to drainage works being carried out but no surfacing works had taken place. The Clerk is also to report the area.</p>	
8.04.25. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors: Councillor Kevin Thurlow	<p>Cllr Blackburn has reported to Cllr Thurlow and to Cumberland Council directly, the issue with the removing of rubbish from Brough Street. The residents of Brough Street are currently filling black bin liners which are collected by a council refuse van, however the number of bags is increasing and this is resulting in rats. Cllr Blackburn has concerns that once the collections change to fortnightly, the rat infestation will also increase. Cllr Blackburn is contacting Cumberland Council to investigate further.</p> <p>Cllr Thurlow has requested for two new external doors for the entrances to Brandraw toilet block. The Clerk is to retrieve three quotes. Ongoing.</p>	
9.04.25. Financial Matters:	<p>i) Expenditure and Income Schedule for March 2025:-</p> <p>RESOLVED that the expenditure of £11,217.91 and income of £4,582.86 be approved. The RFO explained the banking problem which resulted in a payment not being processed. This is being investigated by the bank.</p> <p>Members also approved the additional invoices for payment: -</p> <p>GroGreen - £451.20 - Fertiliser for Bowling Green Aquatrust - £151.20 - Legionella Monitoring Programme Cumbria Pest Services - £145.20 - Allotment Rodent Control Contract April to June 25 LR & JA Allen - £169.88 - Van and Mower Fuel</p>	

	<p>CALC - £488.66 - NALC/CALC Annual Subscription S Hullock - £50.00 - Reimbursement for Bake Off Prizes</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31st March 2025: - RESOLVED that the circulated Bank Reconciliation Statements be confirmed and accepted as a true record for the end of the 24/25 financial year.</p> <p>(iii) Quarter 4 2024/2025 Budget Monitoring Report:- The RFO explained that the monitoring report enables a review of the Council's actual spending and income in comparison to that which was budgeted for within various approved headings. This monitoring highlights any potential areas of concern allowing for corrective action to be taken.</p> <p>The report presented was the last monitoring report for the 2024/2025 financial year and covers April 2024 to March 2025. Throughout the year, the Council have already discussed the variances which have been highlighted in this report and agreed virements and transfers in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. In addition, since the financial implications of decisions taken by the Council are discussed at meetings prior to being approved, Councillors are aware of instances when they have approved the use of balances or additional funding received, which is not ring fenced.</p> <p>The RFO gave an overview of the net position at the end of the year explaining that although the report showed a surplus of £15,335.55, this included receipt of National Lottery Funding Grant of £20,000 to be used specifically on the Ninja trail project, as well as £3,000 funding earmarked for the outdoor gym project. Therefore, the Council has used around £7,600 of bank balances to cover the expenditure incurred throughout the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>It was also explained that these figures would form part of the year end return which is subject to both internal and external audit. RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report for the final quarter to March 2025 be accepted and approved, with Councillors agreeing the virements/transfers made within the report.</p> <p>i(v) Asset register as at 31.03.25:- The RFO explained that the net increase of the Council assets during 2024/25 amounted to £2,657.97. This was due to the purchase of the Clerks Apple MacBook and iPhone, 2 Strimmer's, a Pressure Washer and Mower. RESOLVED that the circulated Asset Register be confirmed and accepted as a true record for the end of the 24/25 financial year. It was noted that the value of</p>	
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	the Council's assets as of 31st March 2025 is £410,328.09. This will be reported in the year end accounting statement.	
10.04.25. Cumberland Council Housing Strategy:	<p>The Clerk had received an email from Cumberland Council, which included a survey wanting to hear from local people on the new housing strategy and how they finalise things. The work they are doing is to increase the supply of housing, making housing accessible and improve the housing needs within the communities. The Clerk circulated the survey for councillors to complete and return to Cumberland Council by Tuesday 29th April 2025.</p> <p>It is felt local people aren't given first refusal of housing available within the town. The Clerk has liaised with Homegroup and written to MP Markus Campbell-Savours to urge more local people are given the opportunity to reside in their own town.</p>	
11.04.25. VE Day 8th May 2025:	<p>Due to further events being organised in the town by the council, no event will take place for VE Day celebrations. However, we have purchased bunting which will be erected at the Memorial park gates and along the fencing and also around the Brae Lamp.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p>	
12.04.25. Royal Mail Delivery Issues:	<p>Cllr Gregory has sent correspondence to our local MP Markus Campbell-Savours and to Royal Mail customer services due to the issues in the town of mail getting delivered to incorrect addresses. Cllr Gregory received over 35 complaints from other residents not receiving the correct mail. He is awaiting on a response from all parties. Ongoing.</p> <p>Cllr Gregory and Cllr Hankin are enrolled on the Neighbourhood Policing Programme ran by CALC. At the last meeting via zoom, CALC were having issues with their IT connections therefore the meeting did not go ahead.</p>	
13.04.25. Parks & Allotments:	<p>Lease: The lease between the landowner of Lawson Street allotments and the council is with Cllr Thurlow's solicitor, awaiting on a reply.</p> <p>Allotments: Following the Parks & Allotments emergency meeting on Friday 4th April, where it was decided and agreed by all Councillors on the sub-committee to evict an allotment holder for several reasons, the Clerk received an email from the tenant requesting the council reconsider their decision and disputing reports made to RSPCA. The Clerk explained in full, to all councillors the situation and showed evidence gathered. It was again, a unanimous vote to evict the tenants with immediate effect. It was also suggested to contact our PCSO following an altercation on 8th April between the tenant and the Caretaker and also if messages/emails continued which were to harass the Clerk. This has been a distressing time for the council employees and the councillors stipulated they will not tolerate this</p>	

	<p>behaviour; therefore, the Clerk was asked to respond to the tenant advising them the council decision is final and to evacuate the plot with immediate effect.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>Park: The Clerk had advised a family within St Mungos Park with a dog on a lead that it was a 'no dogs' area due to it being a children's play park and also with the amount of sports being played there. The Clerk was told the dog was an anxiety dog. The Clerk received correspondence from the family wishing to make a complaint. The Clerk contacted CALC for further advice and this was also discussed at the Parks & Allotments meeting on Friday 4th April. The Councillors were all in agreeance it must be strictly no dogs. At tonight's meeting, 8th April, the Clerk informed all councillors of her response from CALC and Cumberland Council which states, following the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) as trustees of the park, we, the council are within our rights to remove dogs from the play park. It also states we can enforce on the spot fines of £100 or if this goes to court the fee would increase to £1000. Cllr Gregory suggested we revisit our rule and alter it slightly to welcome guide dogs only. It was agreed. The Clerk is to order new signage for the park which will replace the old signs. The new signs will advise 'No dogs except guide dogs'. RESOLVED</p> <p>The Clerk is looking to order the outdoor gym for St Mungos Park as we now have funding, however the Clerk has been advised to look into the maintenance costs of the gym. It was agreed the Clerk would speak to other Clerks to gain information before ordering any equipment.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the zip wire is now complete, with new tyres and chair.</p> <p>Cllr Thurlow requested permission to install a manhole in St Mungos Park near the zip wire. This is to help reduce flooding with the drainage issues. It is also thought a further manhole will have to be installed at the path which has recently been repaired, near the old shelter and the draining rods which are said to be stuck below ground need removing. It was proposed by Cllr Gregory and seconded by Cllr Smith we go ahead with the work. RESOLVED</p>	
<p>14.04.25. Town Flowers:</p>	<p>Cllr Reay and Cllr Edmondson are to visit Colourgro in order to secure the flowers we require for the town. It was agreed to concentrate on the town's tubs, including the pit cart, milk churns, viking ship and mangers at Castle Terrace and not order hanging baskets this year. Cllr Edmondson proposed we approach local people to become 'Town Champions' and ask if they would volunteer to water/attend to the tubs of flowers in close proximity of where they live. The Clerk is to post on social pages requesting help to maintain the town flowers.</p> <p>Thanks was given to Cllr Edmondson for her hard work so far with this.</p>	

15.04.25. Risk Assessment & Risk Management Policy:	The Councillors received the policy prior to the meeting. This was agreed and adopted at this meeting on 8 th April 2025. The policy will be updated on the council website. RESOLVED	
16.04.25. Town Events:	Easter Monday at 2pm in St Mungos Park we are hosting some Easter races. The Clerk is to purchase chocolate eggs for the winners of the races for each age group. The Clerk suggested serving tea/coffee etc, all agreed. The Clerk asked if letters could be sent to local businesses for donations and support for the park event in June, all agreed. The next Events Meeting will take place on Monday 28 th April at 2pm.	
17.04.25. Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications: To receive a schedule of correspondence, notices and publications received since the last meeting.		
18.04.25. Applications for Development:		
19.04.25. Items submitted by members:	None	
20.04.25. Items for the next meeting:	Senior Citizens Trip CCTV in St Mungos Park	
21.04.25. Confidential Items:	None	
22.04.25. The next meeting of Aspatria Town Council will take place on Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 6pm.		

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

