

# ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6.00p.m at the Methodist Church Hall, Aspatria.**

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

**Councillors:** Cllr S Maxwell, Cllr A Reay, Cllr K Thurlow, Cllr A Hankin, Cllr K Smith, Cllr M Rose, Cllr D McRea, Cllr L Hunter, Cllr S Edmondson, Cllr H Barker

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

## Minutes

Item		Action
<b>1. Apologies:</b> To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	Cllr C Wilkinson – Work Cllr R Gregory – Illness Cllr C Macdonald – Holiday	
<b>2. Mayors Announcements/Updates:</b>	There was nothing to update.	
<b>3. Declarations of Interest:</b> 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	
<b>4. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023:</b>	The minutes were amended as the carol service was not held at St Kentigerns church but at the Methodist Church. Cllr Hunter provided, as per item 10 of the December minutes regarding stock from the Christmas event, a breakdown of costs and stock used within the community. It was agreed the Christmas sub-committee would meet to discuss purchasing stock for future events. December minutes approved and signed.	
<b>5. Clerks Report:</b>	The Town Clerk applied to DVLA for details of the driver who caused damage to the barrier at Brandraw car park, as this has been ongoing for many months, the council has decided to pay for the barrier and drop the investigation into this. Cllr Gregory had reported issues to the highways, however as Cllr Gregory was not in attendance we are unaware of any update on this. The 'Melissa Bus' which is being ran by Aspatria Medical Group will now use Queen Street car park on Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> January as this provides better access and parking.	

	The RFO is to investigate payments for the water at Brandraw toilet block. The Clerk is still awaiting contact for the Councillors training course.	
<b>6. Public Participation:</b>	Nothing	
<b>7. Confidential Items:</b>	None	
<b>8. Highways:</b>	As per item 5, Cllr Gregory reported several issues, including the road from Brayton to Hayton. Awaiting an update with this.	
<b>9. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors:</b> 9.1 Councillor Kevin Thurlow	Cllr Thurlow advised all councillors to report any highway issue to Cumberland Council. Several complaints have been made regarding the lack of gritting on numerous roads during the lower temperatures. Grit bins throughout the town have now been filled and the public are urged to use them.	
<b>10. Financial Matters:</b>	<p>i) Expenditure and Income Schedule for December 2023:- <b>RESOLVED</b> that the expenditure of £8,126.90 and income of £155.00 be approved.</p> <p>Members also approved the additional invoices for payment:- NPower - Toilet Block (December 2023) £77.29 Aquatrust - Legionella Monitoring £144.00 Wilmots Amusement and Catering - Hire of fairground rides for Christmas Light Switch-On £1,450.00</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31st December 2023 - <b>RESOLVED</b> that the circulated Bank Reconciliation Statements be confirmed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>(iii) Quarter 3, 2023/24, Budget Monitoring Report <b>RESOLVED</b> that the income and expenditure position for the third quarter to December 2023 was accepted and approved. The RFO gave an overview of the net position at that date and commented on areas of budget under/over spends as recorded in the schedule. Councillors agreed to the transfers made within the report.</p> <p>(iv) Precept for 2024/2025 The Council must set a precept each year by 1 March. At its meeting held on 21 December 2023, the Committee agreed, in principle, a 2024/25 Budget which totalled £109,250. The RFO explained that this would require a substantial contribution from balances.</p> <p>Councillors were then asked to consider the figures presented to them in a report which highlighted the impact of a 0%, 3%, 5%, 10%, 11%, 12% and 13% increase on the precept and:-</p>	

	<p>- recommend whether or not to increase the precept for 2024/25; and</p> <p>- by what percentage the increase should be made, (if any), in order to assist with the Councils 2024/25 expenditure budget of £109,250.</p> <p>Various discussions were held around what impact various levels of precept increases would have on a band D property, bearing in mind the cost of living crisis currently being experienced by many. The RFO acknowledged the current situation but reminded Councillors that the Council were incurring ever increasing costs on all purchases they made. Again, the RFO explained that the proposed budget did require a substantial contribution from balances.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED It was agreed that a 13% increase be applied to the 23/24 precept amounting to a precept request of £87,575.00 for 2024/25. Councillors understand that this is based on a draft Council Tax Base figure for 2024/25 as supplied by Cumberland Council, (not finalised until the end of January 2024), and that any change to this will impact the figures discussed. Councillors also agreed that requesting this level of precept will still require a contribution from balances to fund the proposed 2024/25 budget.</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Power Payments to Resident:</b> <b>Resolved</b> - That the Clerk and RFO update the Christmas Power Payments list and bring this to the next meeting for approval and payment.</p>	
<b>11. Town Caretaker Vacancy:</b>	<p>The letter of resignation from Mike Blair was received end of December and this has been accepted, in writing. Mr Blair will leave his employment with the council on 26<sup>th</sup> January 24. The job description has been agreed and contract hours will remain at 37 hours per week, proposed by Cllr Maxwell and seconded by Cllr Reay. It was also agreed the successful candidate will be employed on a six-month probationary period and will be offered £12 per hour plus pension. The vacancy will be advertised on the website and in the noticeboards. The closing date will be 31<sup>st</sup> January, with interviews taking place on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.</p>	
<b>12. Council's Policies:</b> Policies to be reviewed, adopted and updated on the council website.	<p>The Town Clerk updated and circulated the Equality and Diversity Policy prior to the meeting. All Councillors were in agreement this policy be adopted at tonight's meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January. This will be updated on the council website.</p>	TC
<b>13. Christmas Raffle:</b>	<p>The 'lights in the window' raffle was drawn at the meeting, prizes were as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> Sealy mattress, 2<sup>nd</sup> £100 cash, 3<sup>rd</sup> £50 Marks and Spencer voucher, 4<sup>th</sup> Mot voucher, 5<sup>th</sup> £40 fuel voucher, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup></p>	

	£25 cash, 9 <sup>th</sup> screwdriver set, 10 <sup>th</sup> dog bed and 11 <sup>th</sup> £10 beauty voucher. Winners will be posted on social pages and in the towns noticeboards.	
<b>14. Parks &amp; Allotments:</b>	<p>Councillors discussed increasing the amount tenants pay to rent the allotment plots. These haven't been increased for years and with the running costs of the allotments it is felt an increase is needed. The smaller plots at Lawson St will now be £50 per year with the larger plots being £70 per year. Outgang road will now be £60 per year. This was proposed by Cllr Maxwell and seconded by Cllr Barker.</p> <p>The mowers are due to be serviced, the Clerk has contacted Lloyds and are looking to get these serviced by the end of February.</p> <p>Cllr Maxwell and the Town Clerk were due to meet with a company to discuss new play park equipment, however this was cancelled due to the weather.</p> <p>To enable the council to acquire the funding from Pitch Power, there needs to be two people complete the groundsman course, one of these will be the new Caretaker.</p>	
<b>15. Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications:</b> To receive a schedule of correspondence, notices and publications received since the last meeting.		
<b>16. Applications for Development:</b>	An application for an extension at Brayton Road was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Maxwell could not view the proposal on the Cumberland website.	
<b>17. Items submitted by members:</b>	None	
<b>18. Items for the next meeting:</b>	<p>Catering for Senior Citizen treat 2024</p> <p>Christmas trees for grotto</p> <p>Christmas lights</p>	
<b>19. The next meeting of Aspatria Town Council will take place on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 6pm.</b>		

The meeting ended at 8.05pm

