

ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17th December 2024 at 6.00p.m at the Methodist Church Hall, Aspatria.

PRESENT: Councillor S Maxwell (Chair)

Councillors: Cllr A Maxwell, Cllr K Thurlow, Cllr A Hankin, Cllr K Smith, Cllr S Edmondson, Cllr R Gregory, Cllr A Reay, Cllr L Hunter, Cllr J Marsh, Cllr B Blackburn, 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
1.12.24. Apologies: To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	Rebecca Edmondson was invited to attend as part of an induction on becoming a Councillor however she was unable to attend due to illness. Cllr Marsh apologised to Cllr Alan Maxwell for breaching her Code of Conduct as a Cllr at the Extraordinary Meeting on 13.12.24. Cllr Maxwell accepted the apology. RESOLVED	
2.12.24. Mayors Announcements/Updates:	The Mayor gave thanks to everyone for their efforts with the Christmas Light switch on and the Senior Citizen treat. Special thanks were given to the Town Clerk and the Town Caretaker for their part in the events as they would not have taken place without their hard work. The Mayor's yearly review for 2024 has been sent to the Town Clerk to post on socials and circulate in the council noticeboards at the beginning of January. Tomorrow, 18 th December 24 the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Clerk are to visit the staff and residents at Park Lodge, organised by the Clerk to engage with the home and remind them of their importance within the community.	
3.12.24. 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	
4.12.24. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held 19th November 2024 :	The minutes were agreed to be of a true record of the last meeting. Approved and signed by the Mayor/Chair. RESOLVED	

<p>5.12.24. Clerks Report:</p>	<p>The Clerk informed the meeting the funding application which was sent to the Community Panel had been successful, meaning with the £1500 from them, £1500 from the Charity Shop and the council match funding £3000, we are able to order the outdoor gym for St Mungos Park. RESOLVED.</p> <p>The Clerk had received a quote for a new noticeboard at Harriston. It was suggested the Clerk retrieve further quotes. Ongoing.</p> <p>The Clerk and the Caretaker had visited Beacon Hill School to give all 138 students there a selection box each off the council. RESOLVED</p> <p>The Clerk reminded Councillors the lights in the window raffle tickets are to be distributed and complete by Friday 20th December. RESOLVED</p> <p>The Clerk had contacted the police due to damage being caused to the string of Christmas lights erected around the changing room building at St Mungos Park. Ongoing.</p> <p>The Tractor Run which had taken place on 16th December was a great turn out in Aspatria. The Clerk had organised the pizza van and donut van to attend at Brandraw Car Park. The vans are to donate to the council for allowing to trade and it was suggested by the Clerk this money be donated to the three charities involved with the tractor run, all agreed. RESOLVED</p> <p>The Clerk has applied to the National Lottery for £20,000 to install a Ninja Trail in one of our parks. A breakdown of equipment costs was required which has now been forwarded to the funding company. Ongoing.</p>	
<p>6.12.24. Public Participation:</p>	<p>Nothing to report.</p>	
<p>7.12.24. Highways:</p>	<p>Drains throughout town have been repaired, including Castle Terrace, CJ's and at the junction at the Sun Inn.</p> <p>The Clerk is to make contact with the Community Service supervisor once again to try and get the offenders reinstated to restore the railings at St Mungos Park. Ongoing</p>	
<p>8.12.24. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors: 9.1 Councillor Kevin Thurlow</p>	<p>Nothing to report.</p>	
<p>9.12.24. Financial Matters:</p>	<p>Expenditure and Income Schedule for November 2024: -</p> <p>RESOLVED that the expenditure of £7,793.21 and income of £3,762.72 be approved.</p> <p>Councillors also agreed the following payments to be made: -</p> <p>A & S Maxwell £50.80 - Reimbursement for Senior Citizens Christmas Hamper</p> <p>Npower £78.46 - Electricity for Brandraw Toilets 1.11.24 - 30.11.24</p> <p>Aspatria Farmers £121.16 - Tools and Materials</p>	

	<p>LR & JA Allen £178.33 – Fuel Cumbria Pest Services £145.20 - Allotments Rodent Control Ministry of Doing £320 – Annual Web Hosting 1.11.24 to 31.10.25 S Bainbridge £150 - Singer for Senior Citizens Christmas Party K Thurlow £579.50 - Cleaning Toilets for October & November 2024 Cumbria Insurance £15 - Change of van postcode overnight.</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation and Statements as at 30th November 2024: - RESOLVED that the Bank Reconciliation and corresponding Statements be confirmed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>The RFO explained that discussions were held with the Cumberland Building Society in respect of interest accounts and switching funds from our current account in order to maximise interest. It was explained that our 30-day notice deposit account is no longer available to customers with other e-savings accounts currently available being at a lower interest rate than what we receive, as well as business charges applying. To move funding from the 30-day notice deposit account requires a form to be completed each month, signed by two cheque signatories and handed into the building society within the timeframe stipulated. Providing this is done every month, we would not lose any interest on the amount we transfer out of the deposit account. Should this not be done, interest on the amount transferred out will be lost. RESOLVED that the RFO was instructed to continue with current practices rather than spend time transferring monies between accounts.</p> <p>(iii) Proposed 25/26 Budget and Appendix A: The RFO talked through each line of the 2025/26 proposed budget and requested guidance from Councillors in respect of any future works which may be planned or known costs to be incurred. The RFO explained that the figures under the Establishment Budget heading had changed since the report was circulated as the Clerk's working hours had been agreed and approved at a recent meeting. The RFO explained that the main contributing factors for the increase in budget for next financial year, in comparison to the current year, is due to the following additions:</p> <p>£3000 – Tree Puning £1000 Outdoor Gym Project £2000 Legal Advice (allotments) £6300 Toilets – previously covered by Cumberland</p>	
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	<p>Council as part of the asset transfer agreement</p> <p>£3000 Festivals</p> <p>£11185 Clerks Hours/Clerk & RFO Pensions/Clerk & RFO NI</p> <p>RESOLVED the Councillors approved a proposed 2025/26 budget amounting to £136,075.00 noting that this will require a considerable contribution from balances of £33,840 should no increase in precept be agreed for the next financial year.</p> <p>It was also acknowledged that this 2025/26 budget does not include any expenditure or income in relation to a proposed second asset transfer, (toilet block), or purchase of any buildings in respect of potential Town Hall premises. The RFO informed Councillors that the precept setting report would be brought to the January 2025 meeting based on this approved budget.</p>	
10.12.24. Town Hall:	<p>Cllr Thurlow informed the meeting no funding was available at the moment for the council to apply for in order to purchase the old gym building as a Town Hall. It is a possibility we will look at this again in the future.</p>	
11.12.24. Railway 200:	<p>The Clerk had received an email from CALC as local councils are celebrating in many ways throughout 2025 to mark the 200th anniversary of the modern railway. The councillors agreed to have a think how Aspatria could celebrate and will discuss this at January meeting. Ongoing.</p>	
12.12.24. Memorial Benches:	<p>It was decided at this meeting the protocol for families wanting to purchase and install benches in memory of loved ones must contact the Clerk to seek permission, if permission was granted the family would purchase a bench from the council's supplier and it would be installed by the Town Caretaker at a cost set by the council. The family can request positioning of the bench however this is at the council's discretion.</p> <p>RESOLVED.</p>	
13.12.24. Defibrillator:	<p>The Clerk has enquired about placing a Defibrillator at the Methodist Church on the external building for use by the public. There are currently two defibs within the town, one being at the Bowling Club and the other at the Masonic. The Clerk suggested the Methodist Church as it is central to the town. All Cllrs were in agreeance. Ongoing.</p>	
14.12.24. Parks & Allotments:	<p>Due to the storm which occurred in October causing damage to the trees in St Mungos Park and the tree surgeon advising they be felled, the Clerk enquired with the council insurance if a claim could be made to help cover the costs. It was proposed by Cllr Gregory and seconded by Cllr Marsh we go ahead with the claim. Ongoing.</p> <p>As per the Clerks Report the funding for the outdoor gym has now been confirmed and this will be ordered.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED. The van insurance had quoted £15 admin fee to change the address for the council van to reside overnight at the Caretakers address as opposed to Brandraw car park. It was proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Rose to action this; however it was reminded the council van must only be used for work purposes. RESOLVED.</p> <p>The Junior football team had written to Cllr Reay to dispute the amount on their invoice for the hire of council facilities (changing room and pitches). Cllr Reay put to the council it was a relief the Juniors had moved matches to Beacon Hill School to help reduce the parking issues at St Mungos Park, however the park is there for everyone to use. Cllr Maxwell (Mayor) read the letter from Damon McRea in full to the council. It was said by the Town Clerk other councils charge for use of pitches as well as buildings due to the cost of maintaining them with staff wages to cut the grass and verti-draining and seeding by contractors each year. Cllr Alan Maxwell questioned if they have 100+ juniors all paying £120 in yearly subs what the issue is paying £1000 for the season. It was suggested by Cllr Thurlow to allow the Juniors to pay £500 for the rest of this season, until August 25. The Clerk advised the council there are in fact three adult teams and not two as per Damon's letter. Therefore four teams all paying £500 per season is £2000 per year as minuted from May's meeting. It was agreed the RFO would send a credit note for £1000 to juniors to cancel any outstanding payment and revise the invoice for £500, however this is to be reviewed next year for all teams. Clerk to email Damon at Juniors. Ongoing.</p>	
<p>15.12.24. Christmas events:</p>	<p>The Clerk was informed by Park Lodge that their residents weren't aware of the Senior Citizens treat as they would love to attend, the Clerk is to invite them next year. RESOLVED</p> <p>Cllr Reay was impressed with how well attended the event was with over 135 guests and all positive feedback on the hot food provided by Gwen Atkinson. The council every year donate to Jigsaw the Eden Valley Hospice Childrens Charity for having our Santa at the switch on and for use of the sleigh, however this year a big thanks was given to Joe at Silloth Christmas Lights for all their help and the loan of trees, grotto and decorations. It was proposed by Cllr Rose and seconded by Cllr Hankin the council donate £100 to Jigsaw and £400 to Joe at Silloth. RESOLVED.</p> <p>Cllr Thurlow left at 8.05pm</p>	
<p>16.12.24. Brandraw Car Park:</p>	<p>The Clerk asked for permission from the council to invite the pizza van, which attended the switch on, to attend the town regularly to sell pizzas. It is thought a Monday or Tuesday evening would be best as other takeaway outlets are closed on those nights. The</p>	

	council agreed on the condition a donation of £40 be made each time they use council land. RESOLVED The Clerk had also spoken with Fletchers fun fair who provided the fair within the town for many years and suggested they return regularly to the town. The Clerk put this to the council who all agreed this would be a great service for the town whilst also benefiting from a donation to use our land. The Clerk is to contact Fletchers. Ongoing.	
17.12.24. Town Council Appreciation Scheme:	Cllr Marsh has proposed two letters of appreciation, one being to Christine Macdonald for her involvement at the council and the other being to the residents of a house at Lawson Street who provide a 'grotto' for the town's children. The children can post a letter to Santa and they will receive a Santa letter with a candy cane, provided at their own cost. Agreed to send correspondence. RESOLVED. The RFO requested the Clerk contact the school of one of our volunteers from the light switch on as he worked so hard helping erect and decorate trees. The council agreed he should receive some recognition. RESOLVED.	
18.12.24. Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications: To receive a schedule of correspondence, notices and publications received since the last meeting.		
19.12.24. Applications for Development:	The Clerk informed the meeting of a refusal of planning permission for a property in Bedford Square due to the extension being restrictive and invasive to other properties. RESOLVED.	
20.12.24. Items submitted by members:	Cllr Hunter resigned as a Councillor with immediate effect. Cllr Hunter stated she would carry out the task of distributing the 'lights in the window' raffle tickets before 20 th Dec, however this meeting of 17 th Dec was to be her last. RESOLVED.	
21.12.24. Items for the next meeting:	CCTV/Lighting at St Mungos Park Railway 200 Meeting date for Christmas sub-committee and P&A sub-committee	
22.12.24. Confidential Items:	None	
23.12.24. The next meeting of Aspatria Town Council will take place on Tuesday 21st January 2025 at 6pm.		

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

