

# ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7.00 p.m. at the Methodist Church Hall, Aspatria.

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

**Councillors:** Cllr S Maxwell, Councillor A Reay, Cllr B Blackburn, Cllr K Thurlow, Cllr R Gregory, Cllr K Smith, Cllr M Rose, Cllr D McRea

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

### Minutes

Item		Action
<b>1. Apologies:</b> To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	Mr Jim Lister	
<b>2. Mayors Announcements/Updates:</b>	Councillor Maxwell informed the council of a meeting he held on 11 <sup>th</sup> October whereby Cllr Reay, Mr Mike Blair and the Town Clerk were also present. The meeting was to discuss the town caretaker's tasks, making sure these are always prioritised. Cllr Maxwell felt the meeting was positive.	
<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 Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022:</b> To authorise the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the last Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on	Approved.	
<b>5. Matters arising from Minutes of the last Meeting held Tuesday 13 September 2022.</b>	Cllr Maxwell enquired if we had heard anymore from the Wigton Bath's Trust regarding a grant, which we have not. Due to the torrential rain at the beginning of October Jubilee Footpath once again flooded. It is felt the work carried out has reduced the flooding on the path but not cured the issue. Cllr Thurlow has spoken with Hayley Bishop at Cumbria County Council, and she has advised there are still funds available to rectify the problem. Cllr Thurlow has requested to be present at the next site meeting.	Ongoing

	<p>Work on the waste land at Outgang Road commenced early October, however the contractors have only completed half of the area due to the land being flooded. Cllr Reay suggested for next year the contractors visit the site earlier as the land has a history of flooding later in the year. Dreamscheme have offered to erect a CCTV camera which will capture the Brandraw car park.</p>	AR to action
<b>6. Public Participation:</b>	<p>Cllr Blackburn has been asked to approach the meeting with the problem of potholes on Queen Street car park. Cllr Blackburn also required information on whose responsibility it is to weed the areas of the town. This is said to be Allerdale.</p>	TC to action
<b>7. Highways:</b>	<p>The council have reported numerous times, several issues throughout the town which need to be addressed. These include the school crossing lights at Richmond Hill and Beacon Hill School working at incorrect times, damage to the pavements outside Beacon Hill School, damage to the pavements opposite the post office and Aspatria train station being the only station on the line without a digital display screen. Town Clerk has sent various emails but to no avail. It was suggested these matters be addressed with the highway contact from Maryport.</p>	TC to action
<p><b>8. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors:</b></p> <p>1.1 Councillor Jim Lister</p> <p>1.2 Councillor Kevin Thurlow</p>	None	
<b>9. Lawson St Allotments – New ownership:</b>	<p>Having received a letter from Brockbanks solicitors regarding new ownership of the land in which the Lawson St allotments reside, the Town Clerk has tried on several occasions to gather further information from the solicitors to then decide what the council need to do to move forward.</p>	Ongoing
<b>10. Financial Matters:</b>	<p>Members Schedule for September 2022:- RESOLVED that the income and expenditure detailed for September 2022 in the attached schedule be approved.</p> <p>Councillors also agreed the following payments to be made:- S&amp;A Maxwell £58.35 - Reimbursement of mileage and parking costs Aspatria Farmers £18.36 - Various materials LR &amp; JA Allen £190.34 - Fuel Aquatrust £131.10 - Legionella Monitoring</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 30th September 2022 - RESOLVED that the circulated Bank Reconciliation Statements be</p>	

	<p>confirmed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>(iii) Quarter 2, 2022/23 Budget Monitoring Report RESOLVED that the income and expenditure position for the second quarter of the year to September 2022 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, as well as requesting approval of the following virements as detailed below:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a £1,500 virement between the underspend on the Cumbria in Bloom budget to ease the overspend on the Changing Room budget.</li> <li>- a £1,590 virement from the Donations income received to ease the overspend on the Allotment budget.</li> <li>- £1,000 virement from the Toilet Block income received to cover the expenditure incurred on the toilet block. RESOLVED that the virements be accepted and approved.</li> </ul> <p>Valuation Office Request:- The RFO circulated a letter from the Valuation Office in relation to the Aspatria War Memorial Recreation Ground, St Mungos Park to ascertain whether any of the Councillors could recall a similar request for information being received in the past. The RFO explained what the request for information covered and stated that this may be a five year request, as she has never come across a similar request since joining Aspatria Town Council.</p> <p>None of the Councillors could recall previously seeing such a request and it was RESOLVED that the RFO complete the online return by the required deadline.</p> <p>External Audit Sign Off:- (a) Resolved that the External Audit report regarding the sign off of the 2021/2022 year end accounts be accepted. The RFO gave an overview of the comment made by the External Auditor following completion of their review. It was explained that on the basis of their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in their opinion, the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.</p> <p>(b) Resolved that the preparation and publication of "Notice of conclusion of audit" which details the rights of inspection, in line with the statutory requirements, along with the certified AGAR (Sections 1, 2 &amp; 3) has been published on the Council's website and notice boards as this had to be done before 30 September 2022.</p>	
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	<p>Reimbursement of Christmas Energy Costs to Residents:  The RFO gave a brief overview of the potential increase in this year's costs to the Council for the reimbursement of energy charges to the residents who use their electricity for the town's Christmas lights. The RFO explained that last year, reimbursement to residents was in the region of £190.00 in total. However, given the substantial increase in energy costs, this year, the cost to the Council could be around £320 or more, (especially if those residents who previously supplied electricity free of charge decide they want to be reimbursed for the cost they incur).  RESOLVED - Councillors acknowledged the potential increase in electricity reimbursement cost, this year, to residents for the Christmas lights.</p> <p>Changing Room Charges:-  The RFO expressed her concerns that the Council were, perhaps, not aware of the usage of the changing rooms by the adult football teams and whether the corresponding income for such usage was being received.  The RFO explained that since joining the Council, the charge for the usage of the Council's changing rooms by the adult football teams has always been £20 per session. Looking at the income received over the years, this appears to have declined, although the lockdown during Covid did impact this.</p> <p>The RFO explained that although a locked wall box had been installed in the changing rooms for teams to post fees, this is currently not insured. The RFO also highlighted that while continuing to monitor electricity usage, via meter readings, the Caretaker has pointed out a couple of instances when taps had been left running, lights left on and the fan running, all of which used electricity for which the Council are being charged.</p> <p>Discussions were held around how usage of the changing rooms could be controlled/monitored to ensure everything is properly accounted for. Discussions were also held around whether the current charge of £20 should be increased. The RFO explained that given the current significant cost of electricity and water rates, the Council would only break-even if usage of the changing rooms was substantially increased or the charge was increased to an unrealistic level.</p> <p>RESOLVED - that the rate for adults' teams using the changing rooms be increased to £30 per session. It was agreed that the Parks and Open Spaces committee hold a meeting to discuss how usage of the changing rooms is monitored, how fees are collected and whether a charge should be implemented for</p>	
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	<p>juniors using the changing rooms</p> <p>Use of PAYE Credit The RFO explained that HMRC have written on a few occasions now stating that the Aspatria Town Council PAYE account is in credit. The RFO went on to say that she had received such correspondence in the past which had turned out to be inaccurate and so had ignored these letters. However, HMRC continue to confirm a credit balance on the Council's account and so the RFO informed Councillor's that she was going to off-set this credit against PAYE costs going forward.</p> <p>RESOLVED it was agreed the RFO off-set this credit against future PAYE costs until the credit is used.</p> <p>Reimbursement of Chairman's travel costs is detailed above.</p>	
<b>11. Brandraw Car Park Barrier:</b>	<p>Cllr Maxwell explained the metal barrier on exiting the car park was damaged in the summer by a delivery van and had been left on the car park ground. As youths were causing further destruction with the barrier the Town Clerk contacted a firm to get this repaired. On receiving the invoice for the completed work and it being rather steep, Cllr Maxwell suggested the council look further into this and possibly claim from the driver of the van.</p>	Ongoing
<b>12. West Street bench:</b>	<p>The blue bench at West Street which was recently installed had been damaged and was not able to be repaired. The council was contacted by the person responsible and has purchased a replacement bench, however due to the possibility of this reoccurring, the new bench is to be placed at Station Road. The person who replaced the blue bench is to help with the cost of installation. Cllr Reay is to speak to C Bouch for permission to place a bench outside their business for the public waiting on the stagecoach bus. We have had several complaints regarding the 300 service bus driving past people waiting and with this being an hourly service, this is affecting several people within the town. It was agreed placing a bench outside C Bouch and placing the bus stop sign above, would help reduce the issue of the bus not stopping.</p>	Ongoing  AR
<b>13. Town flowers for 2023:</b>	<p>Cllr Reay explained this year the flowers purchased for the town were to be watered by the Town Caretaker to reduce costs. On displaying the flowers, the Town Caretaker struggled to maintain these and unfortunately the flowers did not last very long, which was disappointing for the town. It was in agreeance for next year the Town Clerk retrieve quotes for the flowers to be purchased in our own mangers/baskets and for them to be maintain throughout the summer months.</p>	Ongoing
<b>14. Grant application:</b>	<p>Town Clerk read out a letter from Dreamscheme and St Kentigerns church who are wanting a contribution</p>	

	<p>from Aspatria Town Council to begin a new project which will possibly commence in November. The project is called 'Warm Hub' and this is for anyone to attend and receive soup and a roll, play games, interact with others and keep warm throughout the winter months. The councillors agreed they would donate to such a worthy cause however Dreamscheme and St Kentigerns church would have to follow protocol and complete a grants application form.</p>	TC
<b>15. Website update:</b>	<p>Town Clerk has been working behind the scenes building a new website for the council. Town Clerk showed the councillors the site on the computer and asked for permission for this to go live. The meeting was agreed.</p>	Ongoing
<b>16. Cooperative:</b>	<p>Having wrote to the head office complaining about the condition of the store, the Town Clerk had received a reply from the Co-op which states they have referred the complaint to their area manager. The plan was to either rebuild or relocate the store, although these have been placed on hold due to internal changes. The area manager is to be visiting the Aspatria store within two weeks and is to update the Town Clerk accordingly.</p>	Ongoing
<b>17. Modifications to Library:</b>	<p>Cllr Maxwell referred to the planning permission advisory which declares Aspatria Library have been granted permission to extend and alter internally the existing library to form Aspatria Community Hub. The Mayors noticeboard which is currently erected on the wall was said to be moved to Keswick library, however councillors were in agreeance to store the board in Aspatria until the work is completed.</p>	
<b>18. Monument Cleaning:</b>	<p>Cllr Maxwell has been in contact with the property services manager at Allerdale to discuss the cleaning of the Lawson monument and the surrounding area. A local builder is to meet with Allerdale to discuss this further and supply a quote for the work. The Brae lamp which is owned by Aspatria Town Council is also to be cleaned by the local builder with specialist equipment, at a minimal cost to the council. The council appreciate this. The former Grapes Hotel were instructed to remove the cladding by Allerdale Borough Council. The builder is hoping to use the specialist equipment and restore the building to its original fascia.</p>	
<b>19. Queen St car park toilets:</b>	<p>To be discussed at the next meeting.</p>	
<b>20. Tunnel Bridge car park:</b>	<p>Following from complaints regarding the positions of cars parking on the land, the Town Clerk contacted the highways to see if it was possible for parking bays to be displayed to reduce the issues. Town Clerk read an email to the meeting from the highways stating it is not possible to mark parking bays on the land as it is illegal to drive on the pavement and parking bays would encourage this to happen.</p>	

<b>21. Ownership of land/property in town:</b>	Cllr Gregory suggested the council compose a file or system whereby we hold information on who owns which piece of land throughout the town. Previously, time has been wasted trying to locate the owners of land but having this on an accessible file would reduce this. All in agreeance this was a valuable idea, to be looked at in the new year.	Ongoing
<b>22. Parks &amp; Allotments:</b>	Meeting date to be confirmed for a parks & allotments subcommittee meeting.	TC
<b>23. Anti-social behaviour:</b>	Cllr Blackburn advised the Town Clerk, contact should be made with Peter McCall who is the Police Commissioner in regard to the anti-social behaviour throughout the town. Cllr Maxwell told the meeting the library has recently had to keep their main doors locked even when the library is open due to youths hanging around the area, trying to damage the boarded-up window which was previously smashed. They entered the library swearing and rolling around the floor smoking drugs. The librarian had asked them to leave but failure to do so, she informed the police. Mark Jenkinson MP has informed Cllr Maxwell he plans to use Aspatria Library for a base for the police.	
<b>24. Christmas light event &amp; Senior Citizens Christmas treat:</b>	Cllr Reay has secured the venue for the Senior Citizens treat and organised the entertainment. The food is to be confirmed once we have definite numbers. The Town Clerk has purchased 500 selection boxes which are being stored at Beacon Hill School and has arranged for a sleigh for Santa for the switch on. Town Clerk has composed posters for both events, and these have been displayed in the noticeboards, on social media and the lists for names for the Senior Citizens treat are in several locations throughout the town. Dreamscheme are to build the grotto. It was agreed a Christmas meeting is to be arranged by the Town Clerk as soon as possible to discuss the events further.	
<b>25. Park:</b>	To be discussed at the next meeting	
<b>26. Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications:</b> To receive a schedule of correspondence, notices and publications received since the last meeting.		
<b>27. Applications for Development:</b>		
<b>28. Items submitted by members:</b>		
<b>29. Items for the next meeting:</b>		
<b>30. Confidential items:</b>	None.	
<b>31. The next meeting of Aspatria Town Council will take place on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup></b>		

<b>November at 7.00 p.m. at the Methodist Hall, Aspatia.</b>		
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**The meeting ended at 9.10pm**

Chairman.....

Date.....

