

ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 6.00p.m at the Methodist Church Hall, Aspatria.

PRESENT: Councillor A Maxwell (Chair)

Councillors: Cllr S Maxwell, Cllr K Thurlow, Cllr A Hankin, Cllr K Smith, Cllr M Rose, Cllr L Hunter, Cllr S Edmondson, Cllr R Gregory

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

Minutes

Item		Action
1. Apologies: To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	Cllr C Wilkinson – Holiday Cllr H Barker - Appointment Cllr C Macdonald – Prior engagement Cllr A Reay – Illness Cllr D McRea – Work	
2. Mayors Announcements/Updates:	Councillor Maxwell welcomed our new Town Caretaker Jack Baker to the council and introductions were made. Jack will commence his employment with the council on 4 th March. Unfortunately, Cllr Reay, who is Chair of the Parks & Allotments was not at the meeting, as Jack will work alongside the Parks & Allotments committee. Cllr Maxwell and the Town Clerk are to arrange a 'hand over' with Jack which will include a walk around the town, informing Jack of tasks to be carried out as per his job description.	
3. 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. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held 16th January 2024 :	The minutes were agreed to be of a true record of the last meeting. Approved	
5. Clerks Report:	The Town Clerk had posted on social media, a winning ticket number for a prize in the Christmas lights raffle, however no proof of ticket could be provided from the possible winner, therefore it was agreed the second address drawn would win the prize. The Clerk informed the meeting she was due to meet with Aquatrust at the changing rooms to carry out the legionella testing.	
6. Public Participation:	Cllr Rose had been approached from a resident at Crookey to enquire if a sign could be erected at the	

	<p>entrance to Crookey informing drivers there is no through road as incidents have occurred when vehicles have tried to manoeuvre out of the area, Cllr Thurlow to investigate.</p> <p>Cllr Smith had been informed by a member of the public the allotments at Lawson Street are very untidy and some plots seemingly look empty and abandoned, however the Clerk advised there were only two plots empty and the new tenancies commence in March. The Parks & Allotments Committee are to reconvene to inspect the allotments. The Council were made aware the large metal gate at Victoria Park had been damaged, the Clerk is to contact the contractor to arrange repairs.</p>	KT
7. Councillor Vacancy:	The Town Clerk had received an application from Jennifer Marsh to re-join the Council. Jennifer was a Councillor for a short period of time however due to ill health had to resign. It was proposed by Cllr Gregory to accept the application and seconded by Cllr Edmondson. The Clerk will contact Jennifer.	
8. Confidential Items:	None	
9. Highways:	Several discussions are ongoing regarding a crossing to be placed at Richmond Hill School due to concerns of safety when the children are going to and from school. Cllr Thurlow had received an email from Cumberland Council stating following a crossing assessment, a pedestrian crossing was not feasible due to the location and to install a crossing at the nearest suitable location, its usage would be likely to be very low as it is too far away from the desired line to cross by pedestrians. The Council will suggest extra standing figures to be placed on the zig zag areas to help reduce parking and also 20mph signs as a guidance for that area. The Town Clerk will also contact the police for assistance with this issue.	
10. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors: 9.1 Councillor Kevin Thurlow	<p>Cllr Thurlow reported Brandraw toilets are being used by youths to smoke, leaving rubbish and vapes down the toilets. The Town Clerk is to post on social pages if this continues, the council will look at closing the toilet block.</p> <p>The taps in the toilet block are also not working correctly, the Caretaker will investigate this once he begins employment.</p>	
11. Financial Matters:	<p>i) Expenditure and Income Schedule for January 2024:- RESOLVED that the expenditure of £9,139.65 and income of £5.00 be approved.</p> <p>Members also approved the additional invoices for payment:- Gwen Atkinson - £1,800.00 Senior Citizens Christmas Party 2023 Gwen Atkinson - £160.00 Civic Service NPower - £102.47 Toilet Block Electricity (January</p>	

	<p>2024) LR & JA Allen - £112.38 Van Fuel Kevin Thurlow - £806.49 Cleaning Toilets for November to January and Materials Robert Cooper - £45.00 - Repair Leak in Loft in Changing Rooms</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31st January 2024 - RESOLVED that the circulated Bank Reconciliation Statements be confirmed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>(iii) Christmas Power Payments 23/24 The revised payments schedule was discussed. RESOLVED that the Chairman would check with one property whether they wished to be reimbursed for the use of their power or not and then inform the RFO. All other payments shown on the circulated schedule would be made.</p> <p>(iv) Internal Audit Requirements Review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit Arrangements:- The RFO circulated a report which covered the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal audit. The RFO explained that this review is an integral part of the continually improving governance and accountability arrangements of the Council.</p> <p>Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25:- Part of the process for the Internal Audit operation is the adoption of an Internal Audit Plan. The RFO circulated the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 and explained the areas contained therein.</p> <p>Appointment of the Internal Auditor:- The RFO explained the background and experience of the current Internal Auditor used by the Council and sought approval for the reappointment of Mrs. Airey as Internal Auditor for the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>RESOLVED that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the internal audit arrangements are considered effective and are to be used by the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2024/25. - the areas proposed within the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan are accepted. - Mrs Jean Airey be reappointed as the Internal Auditor for the Council's 2024/25 financial year. <p>(v) Precept Request The RFO informed Councillors that she had been contacted by Cumberland Council to explain why the 2024/25 precept had been increased by more than 10%. The RFO informed Councillors that she explained to Cumberland that no or nominal increases</p>	
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	<p>had been applied in previous years, but due to the vast increase in the cost of living and use of Council balances to cover day to day running costs, it was considered necessary to reflect this in the 2024/25 precept request.</p> <p>RESOLVED - the discussion between the RFO and Cumberland Council was noted.</p> <p>(vi) Brandraw Toilets Water Rates and approval to set up a Direct Debit for payments: The RFO explained that Cumberland Council had contacted the water provider to inform them of ownership transfer of the toilet block to Aspatria Town Council, supplying the water supplier with a photograph of the meter reading. The RFO contacted the water providers to notify them of our ownership and request all water bills be sent to RFO going forward. The water supplier have requested copies of the purchase document as well as our contact details which the RFO will now provide.</p> <p>The RFO requested that the water payments be made via a Direct Debit and requested approval to complete a direct debit mandate.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the requested information be provided to the water supplier and a Direct Debit mandate be completed to ensure the water rates are paid via this method.</p> <p>RFO leaves at 8pm</p>	
12. Council's Policies: Policies to be reviewed, adopted and updated on the council website.	The Town Clerk updated and circulated the Data Protection Policy prior to the meeting. All Councillors were in agreement this policy be adopted at tonight's meeting on 20 th February. This will be updated on the council website.	TC
13. Christmas Lights and Events:	<p>The caterer for the Senior Citizens Treat had suggested changing the catering for our event this year to a hot meal. It is thought it would possibly be soup, pie and peas and a choice of three desserts. The Clerk is to contact the caterer for a menu and price, to be discussed at a later date.</p> <p>Some of the white Christmas trees for the grotto need replacing, the Clerk will try and purchase some new ones for this year.</p> <p>The Clerk informed the council of a company who is able to provide the town with new Christmas lights, which would possibly be fixed on to and powered by the street lights. Cllr Thurlow to contact Cumberland Council regarding the power supply for these.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>TC</p> <p>TC</p> <p>KT/TC</p>
14. Parks & Allotments:	<p>Tenancies have been circulated to plot holders for renewal.</p> <p>An extra bin is needed at the Lawson Street allotments due to dog walkers using the area to walk</p>	

	<p>their dogs and leaving dog bags lying on the ground. Town Clerk to request a bin.</p> <p>The two mowers are due to be serviced by Lloyds, the Clerk is arranging this for when the Caretaker has started work.</p> <p>The groundsman course is a requirement for the pitch power funding, however this has been on hold due to having no Caretaker. It is felt the football clubs should be heavily involved in this, unfortunately Cllr McRea was not in attendance at the meeting. Ongoing.</p> <p>Cllr Maxwell and Cllr Thurlow met with a company who provide play park equipment. The company are to provide the Clerk with a quote.</p> <p>The tyre swing has been removed due to it being unsafe and the area where the frame stands needs cleaning. Ongoing</p> <p>The Clerk is contact Maryport Aquarium regarding the company they use to service the zip wire.</p> <p>It was reported the CCTV system in the changing rooms had a fault, the Clerk is meeting with an engineer on 28th February.</p> <p>Cllr Smith and Cllr Rose leave at 7.45pm</p>	TC
15. Town Flowers:	<p>The Clerk had contacted a previous supplier for the flowers for spring and had received a quote for 20 hanging baskets, 2 smaller baskets for the viking ship, 12 mangers for Castle Terrace and 100 x6 packs of bedding plants. The pots will be dropped at the supplier to be planted up and collected again in May. It was proposed by Cllr Thurlow to go ahead with the order and seconded by Cllr Gregory.</p> <p>Jack Baker leaves at 7.50pm.</p>	
16. Mayors Chain:	<p>The chains for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are to be engraved by all Mayors dating back 47 years. There have been 20 Mayors in this time, however the Mayors chain only had 11 links which could be engraved. The Deputy Mayors chain has 28 links, therefore it was put to the meeting to change the chains, meaning the Deputy Mayors chain would now become the Mayors Chain, this was proposed by Cllr Gregory and seconded by Cllr Hankin.</p>	
17. Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications: To receive a schedule of correspondence, notices and publications received since the last meeting.		
18. Applications for Development:	None to be discussed.	
19. Items submitted by members:	None	
20. Items for the next meeting:		
21. The next meeting of Aspatria Town Council will		

take place on Tuesday 19 th March 2024 at 6pm.		
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The meeting ended at 8.10pm

