

ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th June 2023 at 6.00 p.m. at the Methodist Church Hall, Aspatria.

PRESENT: Councillor A Maxwell (Chair)

Councillors: Cllr S Maxwell, Cllr A Reay, Cllr K Thurlow, Cllr R Gregory, Cllr A Hankin, Cllr K Smith, Cllr M Rose, Cllr D McRea, Cllr C Wilkinson, Cllr D Harland

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

Minutes

Item		Action
1. Apologies: To receive and accept apologies and note the reasons for absence.	None	
2. Mayors Announcements/Updates:	<p>Cllr Maxwell gave thanks to everyone for attending the meeting and informed the council, the public participate who was due to attend was no longer able to attend. Cllr Maxwell has been invited to accompany the Mayor of Wigton at the Wigton carnival to represent Aspatria. The Civic Service for the Mayor of Wigton is to be taking place in September, which coincides with Aspatria Civic Service therefore it was discussed and agreed Aspatria would aim to hold their Civic Service on 3rd September at St Kentigerns Church.</p> <p>On 19th June an event was held to discuss the development of the library. This was to present plans of the development and to advise the public work has now commenced and the completion date is October 23.</p> <p>A new initiative for Aspatria is underway, whereby businesses and residents can apply for grants as part of the 'facelift' programme. Cllr Smith asked if this included the rooves on properties, however Cllr Maxwell has been informed this was not in the criteria. An email has been received from CALC advising of a special AGM meeting to be held on 22nd July in which one of the Councillors should attend. This will be agreed at the July meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Reay, as Chair of the parks and allotments clarified some questions which has been asked of the agreement between the council and the bowling club. The bowling club is a private members club, however the bowling green belongs to the council as trustees, as does the memorial park. In previous years the park keeper maintained the green, however this was not to a high standard. The bowling club members suggested they maintain the green at the cost of fertiliser and materials to the council. The members pay a membership fee to the bowling club and the green fees are collected by the council as this is</p>	AM/TC

	<p>council land.</p> <p>Cllr Maxwell had received an email from Cllr Harland on a Sunday, who had been previously informed, contact should only be made on weekdays unless it was an emergency, requiring the procedure entailed when recruiting the Clerk and if any qualifications were obtained. Cllr Maxwell informed the meeting, following the Clerks interview, her references were exceptional, and the Clerk had been highly recommended for her job role. The Clerk explained training was completed on taking the role as Clerk and the further qualification CILCA could not yet be completed as CALC advised, inadequate time within the role would make this difficult to complete.</p> <p>Cllr Maxwell addressed certain issues that were included in numerous emails from Cllr Harland and also in a letter addressed to the Chair, at his home address not the council address, following Cllr Harlands first meeting. All Cllrs were introduced to the new Cllrs at the May meeting. Cllrs contact details and addresses can be found on the council website following the election process. The council is praised by both CALC and external auditors for the tasks carried out by the Town Clerk and the RFO. Council policies are due to be reviewed and as previously agreed this would be done at each meeting. The council prides themselves on being transparent due to the fact we have social media pages including facebook, Instagram and a website. We also have five noticeboards throughout the town and many councillors are seen face to face within the town. The legal agreements and insurance issues are the responsibility of the Clerk who is the proper officer of the council. The maintenance of the Memorial Park is included on the Town Caretakers job description, alongside responsibilities throughout the whole town. The new lease for the Lawson Street allotments is ongoing with the landowners solicitor. The demand for documentation and the unreasonable timescale was somewhat of a bullying nature towards the Clerk. As agreed, the Clerk visited Cllr Harlands home with the said information to then be turned away and the documents no longer required. The Clerk is contracted to 18 hours per week and the RFO is 10 hours per week. They both prioritise their workload accordingly and the communications to the Clerk from Cllr Harland lead the Clerk to feel under unneccassry strain and questioning her ability.</p> <p>Cllr Gregory agreed with the Chair on these comments and praised the Clerk and RFO for their continued hard work. Cllr Gregory reiterated Cllr Maxwells comments and made it clear to the meeting the requests made from Cllr Harland were not reasonable and timescales could not be met. Cllr Gregory informed the meeting of Cllr Harlands complaint to the monitoring officer of Cumberland Council before the deadline given to the Clerk, this was then retracted as the Clerk had provided the</p>	
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	<p>documentation. Cllr Gregory stated, as the Clerk and the RFO had considered their roles at the council due to the endless amounts of emails received, he would also step down as Councillor. Cllr Smith was most disgusted to hear of such behaviour and ensured for over 24 years, she has been a committed councillor and had done so to the best of her ability.</p> <p>Cllr Harland confirmed he had no intentions to upset any of the council members and was not connected to any other source. Cllr Harland suggested he would review policies on behalf of the council and gave apologies for the way he had handled these issues. Cllr Stephanie Maxwell thanked Cllr Harland for the offer of help.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	None	
<p>4. Minutes of Aspatia Town Council Meeting held 31st May 2023:</p>	Approved	
<p>5. Clerks Report:</p>		
<p>6. Public Participation:</p>	Apologies were sent due to illness	
<p>7. Vacancies on Council:</p>	<p>The Town Clerk read out a letter of application from Kevin Thurlow. Cllr Gregory proposed the council accept the application; this was seconded by Cllr Stephanie Maxwell.</p> <p>The Town Clerk read out a letter of application from Linda Hunter. Cllr Gregory proposed the council accept and this was seconded by Cllr Stephanie Maxwell.</p>	
<p>8. Highways:</p>	<p>Cllr Thurlow and his community panel had a walk around the town, visiting both the primary and secondary school entrances. It was discussed to tarmac the entrance to Richmond Hill and Cllr Thurlow can use some of his personal funding to do so.</p> <p>On Jubilee Walk footpath jetting wagons have opened the drain and jetted up the path, in the hope to reduce further flooding. Access to the field where the pipe runs is needed and the footpath itself needs heightened.</p>	
<p>9. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors: 9.1 Councillor Kevin Thurlow</p>	<p>The refuse strike is to continue for several weeks. There have been no negotiations and therefore no resolution.</p> <p>Cllr Thurlow leaves at 7.25pm</p>	

10. Financial Matters:

(i) Expenditure and Income for May 2023:

RESOLVED that the expenditure of £12,048.19 (including VAT) and the income of £6,578.29 as detailed for May in the attached schedule be approved.

Members also approved the following payments to be made: -

Aspatia Farmers	£25.85
Cumbria Pest Control – Allotments	
£145.20	
NPower - Brandraw Toilets	
£46.64	
The Lakes Homecentre	£571.69
LR & JA Allen	
£241.40	

An invoice was received from Royal Mail amounting to £39.60 for the use of the PO Box. The RFO explained that a DD mandate, as approved at the previous Council meeting, was completed and posted. The RFO stated that she would check whether this DD has been withdrawn from our account. If it hasn't and there has been a cross over between the invoice and the DD mandate, Councillors were asked to approve the payment of this invoice and the RFO will follow up the DD form with Royal Mail.

RESOLVED that the invoice should be paid if the DD has not been withdrawn from the Council's bank account and the RFO to follow up the status of the DD mandate with Royal Mail.

(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation and Statements as at 31st May 2023.

RESOLVED that the circulated Bank Reconciliation and corresponding Statement be confirmed and accepted as a true record.

(iii) Internal Audit Requirements:-

- **Audit Report to March 2023:-**
The Year End report prepared by the Auditor, Mrs Jean Airey, was circulated and noted.
- **Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit Arrangements:-**
The RFO circulated a report which

	<p>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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24:- 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 2023/24 and explained the areas contained therein. • 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 2023/24 financial year. <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 2023/24. • the areas proposed within the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan are accepted. • Mrs Jean Airey be reappoint as the Internal Auditor for the Council's 2023/24 financial year. <p>(iv) Annual Return Report 2022/23: The Annual Return Report for 2022/23 was circulated and discussed. RESOLVED that the details therein be accepted as a true record.</p> <p>(v) Annual Audit 2022/23: (a) Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23: RESOLVED that it be formally recorded that in the opinion of the Council, it has met all its statutory obligations to comply with the Account and Audit Regulations 2015 and accordingly</p>	
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authorises the Chairman and the Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement, prior to submission to the External Auditor.

(b) Section 2 Accounting Statements 2022/23:

RESOLVED that copies of the Council's accounts for the year 2022/23, as circulated by the RFO, be formally received, noted and approved by the Chairman.

(vi) Explanation of Variances for the Year End 31st March 2023:

The report was circulated and the RFO explained the reasons for the variances reported therein.

RESOLVED that the details therein be accepted as a true record.

(vii) Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights:

The proforma for the Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights was discussed and

RESOLVED that the Chairman set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of the unaudited annual Governance & Accountability return for the year ended 31st March 2023 as from Monday 26 June 2023 to Friday 4 August 2023.

(viii) Buildings Insurance Cover

The RFO raised questions about the building cover as detailed in the Council's Insurance documents as the names of the buildings did not corollate directly to those named on the Council's asset register.

The RFO explained that two buildings are detailed in the Council's insurance documentation as: -

Sports Pavilion, St Mungos Park and Changing Rooms, St Mungos Park, whereas the asset register details Changing Rooms as well as the Caretakers workshop.

The RFO explained that she contacted the insurance company to ascertain if supporting documentation could be obtained to give an insight into what the two insured properties covered, but was told that this documentation was not readily available. The insurance company suggested it would simply be better to tell

	<p>them what we wanted the building cover to be named rather than trying to understand the historical names given.</p> <p>RESOLVED that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the two buildings within the insurance document be amalgamated and renamed as Sports Pavilion including the Changing Rooms, Toilets, Kitchen, and Caretakers Workshop. the sum insured for the two buildings within the insurance document be added together and used as the sum insured for the re-named building. 	
11. Risk Register:	<p>Cllr Harland asked if the Risk assessment and the Risk management policy were duplicated. Town Clerk to check with CALC if both documents are required. The Risk Register was approved and adopted 20.06.23</p>	
12. Grant applications:	<p>The Park Play programme is due to finish end of June/July. As the council has frozen grants at the moment, it was discussed they could apply to the Charity shop for a grant. Finances within the council will continue to be reviewed.</p>	
13. Council Policies:	<p>Several policies on the website are to be reviewed. As advised from CALC this can be done one at a time. Cllr Harland offered to review the policies; the Town Clerk is to upload the documentation onto a memory stick for Cllr Harland to work through.</p>	
14. Councillor Training Courses:	<p>The Clerk supplied the councillors with the information from CALC on what training courses they offer. These are completed online and have set dates available. Several councillors felt they would benefit from the course on a face-to-face basis. The Clerk suggested contacting CALC to see if they would provide a course for all the councillors to attend at once.</p>	TC
15. Brandraw Flagstones:	<p>The Town Clerk has concerns regarding the flagstones which are laid at the Brandraw toilet block. These have been in place for many years and currently are very uneven and in disrepair. The Clerk contacted Atkinsons for a price for the flagstones and met with a local builder to retrieve a quote for the work to be carried out. The Town Clerk has enquired if any funding would be available for this through the facelift programme. Cllr Smith proposed the work is to be completed and this was seconded by Cllr S. Maxwell.</p>	
16. Brandraw car park bus shelter:	<p>Due to previous anti-social behaviour the Perspex on the side of the bus shelter has been broken and removed. It is felt these should not be replaced as the</p>	

	visibility from the shelter is much improved, however Cllr Harland suggested, when standing under the shelter, there is no protection from wind and rain. It was suggested rather than replace the Perspex, steel panels could be placed at the sides to improve the shelter for weather. Cllr Maxwell pointed out this would cause less visibility when waiting on the service bus, however the Brandraw bus stop is the main bus stop in Aspatria whereby, each bus must stop. It was discussed Dreamscheme could possibly be involved and paint the bus shelter with a mural relevant to the town. Cllr McRea advised the meeting this would be at a cost to the council as they use an external artist for any work carried out. Town Clerk to retrieve a quote for the steel panel.	TC
17. Park Play:	Town Clerk to investigate if the programme in Aspatria is to continue.	TC
18. Parks & Allotments:	A Parks and Allotments meeting is to be held on Tuesday 4 th July at 5pm at The Letters Inn where all matters will be discussed. Cllr McRea suggested we look at the Football Foundation to acquire funding for the changing rooms. The showers need an upgrade which would cost a considerable amount to rectify. To be discussed at the P&A meeting.	
19. Senior Citizens Trip:	It has been agreed the trip this year will be to Edinburgh. Due to the Edinburgh festival taking place when the trip usually goes ahead, it was agreed for this year the trip will be arranged for the previous week, Tuesday 1 st August. Town Clerk to get quotes for coaches and circulate posters around the town.	TC
20. Town Flowers:	The town flowers and hanging baskets were delivered to the Town Caretaker, however the baskets received were not the same baskets we provided. Mike Blair erected these around the town. The mangers were delivered for Castle Terrace, and we had received 8 mangers too many. Town Clerk to contact supplier. Cllr Gregory offered two hanging baskets for the viking ship for Mike to plant up with flowers we have purchased. Cllr Maxwell gave thanks to Cllr Gregory for his contribution.	TC
21. CCTV – Dreamscheme:	Dreamscheme are happy for the council to erect a CCTV system onto their building, however the council would have to purchase the system themselves. Cllr Thurlow informed the meeting a new CCTV system would be erected onto the library once the development was completed.	
22. Homegroup – Aspatria Housing:	A teams meeting is arranged for 22 nd June at 4pm to discuss Aspatria people not being allocated houses or bungalows in the town before people from outside the area.	

23. Cumberland FA:	To be discussed at the Parks and Allotments meeting.	
24. Railway Station Digital Display:	The digital display is now in place at Aspatria train station.	
25. Brae Lamp painting:	To be discussed at the next meeting.	
26. Anti-social behaviour:	The council feel we should be provided with a police report each month, including details of what is occurring throughout the town. The police have previously attended council meetings but not for some time. The Cllrs believe this would be beneficial to have a police presence at the monthly meetings. Cllr McRea told the meeting Aspatria would be allocated a CBO – Community Beat Officer.	
27. Schedule of Correspondence, Notices and Publications: To receive a schedule of correspondence, notices and publications received since the last meeting.		
28. Applications for Development:		
29. Items submitted by members:		
30. Items for the next meeting:	Aspatria Fun Day	
31. Confidential Items:		
32. The next meeting of Aspatria Town Council will take place on Tuesday 18th July 2023 at 6pm.		

The meeting ended at 9.05pm

