

ASPATRIA TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st November 2023 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 S Edmondson, Cllr C Wilkinson, Cllr D McRea, Cllr C Macdonald, Cllr R Gregory

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.	Cllr L Hunter – Work Commitments	
2. Mayors Announcements/Updates:	<p>Cllr Maxwell updated the meeting on the parade and service on Remembrance Sunday. The parade was well attended considering the adverse weather conditions followed by an excellent service by Reverend Rivalde from Wigton.</p> <p>The Curate Matt Richards is to hold a Christmas Tree Festival followed by a service on Saturday 2nd December at 4pm. There will also be a carol service held at the Methodist Church on 17th December, time yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>The Co-op building is seemingly going to be demolished and replaced with a new building on the same site. Staff are due to be updated on this in February of next year.</p> <p>The Clerk has applied to the DVLA for details of an incident at the Brandraw car park whereby one of the barriers was damaged, the Clerk is waiting on a reply.</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.	None	
4. Minutes of Aspatria Town Council Meeting held 17th October 2023:	Approved.	
5. Clerks Report:	The Councillor training course has now been rearranged to take place in the new year. The venue needed for the course needs to be wheelchair accessible and have a projector screen to deliver the	

	<p>training, it was thought the council could possibly use Beacon Hill School.</p> <p>The Clerk has received a quote to repaint the Brae Lamp but was advised the work would be more suitable being carried out in the spring. Cllr Smith proposed the Clerk contact the contractor to carry out the work next spring, this was seconded by Cllr Gregory.</p> <p>The Clerk received a late application for a vacancy on the council from Henry Barker, who has previously been a councillor but had to retire due to ill health. Cllr Gregory proposed the council co-opt Henry on to East Ward, this was seconded by Cllr Hankin.</p> <p>The Clerk has received several complaints from a resident due to overgrown trees from her neighbour. It was felt as this is private property and not obstructing the public's right of way, this is not a town council issue. The Clerk is to contact the resident.</p> <p>The Town Caretaker and Cllr Reay have collected winter flowers for the town. The council also purchase daffodils to be planted around the town in memory of loved ones. Any member of the public can donate money or daffodils for the Town Caretaker to plant, Cllr Stephanie Maxwell then completes the book within the church in memory of loved ones. Cllrs agreed this should be posted on the Council's social pages to inform the public.</p>	<p>TC</p> <p>TC</p> <p>TC</p>
6. Public Participation:	Nothing	
7. Confidential Items:	<p>Following a meeting with the Town Caretaker to update and implement a new contract, Cllr Maxwell asked the Clerk to provide two copies of the contract and job description to be signed by the Clerk and the Town Caretaker. As the National Living Wage is to increase in April 24, the Council agreed to review the Caretakers salary at this time. Proposed by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Gregory.</p> <p>The RFO presented a paper which calculated the annual financial impact to the Council of the backdated Salary Award recently announced by Nalc for the Clerk and RFO</p> <p>RESOLVED that the circulated paper be accepted and the salary award be applied and backdated to April 2023 for the Clerk and RFO</p>	
8. Highways:	A road closure at Station Road is scheduled to commence on Wednesday 22 nd November and will last approximately two weeks.	
9. To receive for information, reports on issues relevant to the Town from County, District and Independent Councillors: 9.1 Councillor Kevin Thurlow		

<p>10. Financial Matters:</p>	<p>(i) Expenditure and Income Schedule for October 2023:- RESOLVED that the expenditure of £5,108.57 and income of £2,240.00 be approved.</p> <p>Councillors also agreed the following payments to be made:- K Thurlow - £579.50 (Cleaning Public Toilets for Sept and Oct 2023) A&S Maxwell - £52.10 (Travel and Parking Costs Reimbursed) groColour - £339.60 (Plants) Aspatria Farmers - £12.86 (Bulb & Starter) J Airey - £109.90 (Internal Audit for first half of 2023/24) LR & JA Allen - £140.17 - (Fuel) Npower - £53.88 - (Electricity for Brandraw Toilets 1.10.23 - 31.10.23) Cushions & Covers - £543.00 - (Materials for Changing Room Refurbishment - covered by grant) Ollo Design - £473.00 - (Refurbishment Work to Changing Room - covered by grant)</p> <p>(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation and Statements as at 31st October 2023:- RESOLVED that the Bank Reconciliation and corresponding Statements be confirmed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>(iii) To receive the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations The RFO reminded the Councillors of the need to maintain accurate and up to date Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The RFO summarised that Standing Orders are the written rules of the Council. They are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. It was explained that the Council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The Standing Orders of the Council are not the same as the policies of a Council, but Standing Orders may refer to them.</p> <p>(iv) The RFO further summarised that the Financial Regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of the Council. It was explained that the Council is responsible, in law, for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk. RESOLVED that the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as presented, are confirmed as being accurate and timely and are accepted and approved. These will be updated on the Council website.</p> <p>(v) Internal Audit Report to September 2023: The RFO discussed the Internal Audit report received</p>	
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	<p>following a review of the first half of the 2023/2024 financial year. RESOLVED that the half yearly financial audit report be accepted. No recommendations were made for implementation.</p> <p>(vi) Proposed 2024/25 Budget:- The RFO informed Councillors that the proposed 2024/2025 budget will be brought to the next meeting and asked that Members give consideration to any planned expenditure, which they may be aware of, to ensure this is included.</p> <p>The RFO did explain however, that whilst it is necessary to include all costs in the forthcoming budget, Councillors may need to consider increasing the 2024/2025 precept by more than that in previous years, in order to cover any additional costs. Otherwise the Council are simply back to using their balances to cover the day to day running costs of the Council. However, this will be reviewed at the January 2024 meeting, when the precept will be set, following approval of the Council's 2024/2025 budget and knowledge of the Council Tax Base from Cumberland Council, (which will highlight the impact of any precept increase). RESOLVED Councillors will highlight any items of planned expenditure for the next financial year for inclusion in the 2024/2025 budget.</p>	
<p>11. Council's Policies: Policies to be reviewed, adopted and updated on the council website.</p>	<p>As per item 10 on the agenda, the Clerk and the RFO circulated the Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. These were adopted at this meeting on 21st Nov 23 and will be updated on the council website.</p>	TC
<p>12. Christmas Events:</p>	<p>Organising of the Christmas events are underway, Cllr Reay has attended Beacon Hill School to request 8 pupils to attend the Senior Citizen treat to help serve food, Richmond Hill pupils are to sing to the Senior Citizens, the room at the Masonic is hired and the catering has also been arranged. Reverend Richards will open the event to say grace. Cllrs will meet at 10am to prepare the room and display the raffle prizes.</p> <p>Beacon Hill School will host the light switch on event again this year with some students providing a tombola stall. Santa will be arriving at Harriston approximately 4pm to visit the children. He will then travel from the Business Park at 5pm to light the Christmas tree and open Santa's grotto in the school hall.</p> <p>The raffle tickets for the 'lights in the window' were distributed at the meeting and Cllrs were made aware of which area of town they are to cover. The tickets will be circulated the week commencing 18th December and the raffle will be drawn at the Council's January meeting on 16th January 2024.</p>	
<p>13. Brandraw car park:</p>	<p>The barrier and the panels for the bus shelter are to</p>	

	<p>be completed as soon as possible, the contractor has advised the Clerk work was delayed due to weather.</p> <p>A quote was received and approved for new signage for the car park to update details of the Clerk, the new signs should be erected by the end of November.</p>	
14. Parks & Allotments:	<p>Following a play park inspection, the Clerk has received a report for the repairs to be carried out at St Mungos Park and Victoria Park. The reports will be printed and given to the Town Caretaker. The tyre swing has been removed due to disrepair; the council are to discuss repairing/replacing the tyre swing. Quotes are required for the tyre swing and zipwire.</p>	TC
15. Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Chains:	<p>Cllr Maxwell is to acquire the list of previous Mayor's names from the Mayor's board which was previously displayed in the library. The board is currently being stored at Dreamscheme. The names of all past Mayor's will then be engraved onto the chains.</p>	AM/LH
16. Cumberland FA:	<p>The Clerk has successfully applied for funding from the Cumberland FA to help maintain the pitches at St Mungos Park. Cumberland FA have set out a six-year plan for the council and football teams to follow for the upkeep of the grass. The Council approved the grant, and the Clerk is to accept.</p>	Ongoing TC
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	
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 19th December 2023 at 6pm.		

The meeting ended at 8.10pm

