

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN TOWN HALL, COCKERMOUTH ON THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2015

Present: Councillor A Graham Town Mayor/Chair
Councillor I Burns
Councillor S Coates
Councillor L Davies
Councillor P Graham
Councillor C M Jackson
Councillor A Kennon
Councillor E Nicholson
Councillor J Laidlow
Councillor A Smith
Councillor C Smith
Councillor S Standage

Also Present: A press representative, 4 electors and one of the public were present.

Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Councillor P Graham

The Mayor wished Councillor P Graham a happy 50th birthday.

Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 19 May 2014 were signed as a correct record.

Annual Report of the Town Council

The Town Mayor, Andrew Graham presented his report as follows:-

2014/15 has once again been a very busy year for Cockermouth Town Council with 15 Council meetings and 2 Town Twinning Advisory Committee Meetings having been held. Town Council meetings can now be recorded and filmed and as a result the Town Council has adopted a Protocol which is displayed at the entrance to our meeting room.

Our £4.4 million flood risk management scheme was completed in June 2013. The new flood defenses incorporate a series of walls, embankments, glass panels and flood gates along the River Cocker and River Derwent that will increase flood protection to around 360 local homes and 55

businesses. The scheme includes a 120m length of self-closing flood barrier which provides flood protection yet retains views of the river. Cockermouth Town Council paid £20k towards the scheme in 2014, this represented the final instalment of our £120k community contribution.

The Town Council is consulted by the Borough Council on all planning applications within the town of Cockermouth and in all cases comments have been forwarded to the Borough Council setting out the Town Council's views. The final decision on planning applications does not always agree with the views of the Town Council however the majority of decisions do agree.

The Neighborhood Planning 'Front Runners' Pilot Scheme was set up by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in order to trial the process of preparing Neighborhood Development Order(s) (NDO) before the Bill comes into effect. Given the degree of local involvement in the flood recovery work, it was considered that Cockermouth had the necessary community groups and networks to be a suitable 'Front Runners' candidate. Our bid was successful and a steering group was set up to develop and manage the project. The Steering Group with assistance from Allerdale Borough Council has been working on the production and adoption of several NDO(s). These included:-

Use of flats above shops and offices along Main Street & Station Street

Replacement shop fronts of traditional design and materials along Station Street and Main Street
Replacement windows/doors (article 4 properties) on Wordsworth Terrace and Mountain View
Flexible change of use of properties and permission for the placement of tables and chairs on the pavement on Market Place. A pre-examination review of all four Neighborhood Development Orders was undertaken by Mr C E Collison January 2014. Mr Collison's recommendations were taken on board. An independent examination of our Neighborhood Development Order was undertaken in March 2014. The examination resulted in our four orders being combined into one order.

A referendum was held on 17 July 2014, 772 townsfolk voted 'yes' to the following question: -
"Do you want the type of development in the Neighborhood Development Order for Cockermouth to have planning permission? Cockermouth became the first town in the country to implement a Neighborhood Development Order. The turnout was 19.3%

The refurbishment of the Town Hall continues. I am pleased to inform you that every square inch of available space is now occupied. An exhibition showing off artefacts recovered from the Papcastle Dig continues to attract visitors. Illegal parking in the car park in front of the town hall has resulted in the Town Council approaching Allerdale Borough Council to provide parking enforcement on our behalf.

Victoria Hall was leased the Hall to Age UK on 1 April 2012 for a 3 year period. This lease has recently been extended by a further year.

The Tourist Information Centre continues to be managed by Mrs Julia Hindle assisted by a number of part time staff. The Tourist Information Centre relocated to 4, Old Kings Arms Lane on 1 April 2012. The move to a more central location has increased visitor numbers and sales have improved. Allerdale Borough Council reduced our concurrent grant by 50% in 2013/14. Sadly our concurrent grant will be totally withdrawn in 2015/16.

The Town Council have moved and updated their web site. Dates of meetings, minutes of meetings etc are now available at www.ckermouth.org

Twinning links continue to flourish.

Our 31st anniversary celebrations took place between 26th October 2014 – 1 November 2014.

Approximately 54 Marvejolais came to Cockermouth.

Their itinerary included the following visits:-

- Visit to Maryport
- Anniversary Dinner
- Visit to Muncaster Castle
- Visit to St Bees
- Visit to Whitehaven
- Art Exhibition in Percy House Gallery
- Visit to Newcastle
- Visit to Keswick
- Visit to new Whisky Distillery
- Civic Reception

Despite the heavy rain at the beginning of the week everyone enjoyed themselves.

Our 32nd anniversary celebrations will take place in Marvejols between 24 October 2015 – 1 November 2015. Only a few places remain on the coach.

There are several exchanges already planned for 2015/16.

As a result of the town being awarded the Europe Prize in the year 2000 a Europe Prize Scholarship Fund was set up and has now become established and a great help to Cockermouth 6th form youngsters pursuing their studies in Europe. The Committee continues to raise money to keep the fund going for the foreseeable future and the Council continues to actively support the Association of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize of which it is a proud member.

The Council provides allotments on two sites St. Helen's Street and the Gote. The Gote Road allotments was transferred to the Town Council from Cumbria County Council under a

community asset transfer. There are currently 47 people on the waiting list for an allotment. The Council continues to support the Allotment Association and meets them regularly to discuss matters of mutual interest. A successful presentation evening was held in the Council Chamber on 11 September 2014 for winners of the Garden and Allotment Competition.

The Council once again sponsored The Kirkgate Centre to deliver its annual arts programme in Cockermouth during 2014/15. We also sponsored Cockermouth Live which provides a programme of nationally renowned artists which brings our community together. Preparations are well underway for the 2015 event.

The fireworks display held in the Memorial Gardens was a resounding success and will be repeated again this year.

The Council continues to be the owner of Cockermouth Youth Hostel and rent income amounting to £2,500 was received from the Youth Hostel Association during 2013/14.

The Christmas lights were stunning last year, Cockermouth looked amazingly beautiful. The use of one watt led lamps has drastically reduced our electricity bill. The Council organised the usual Best-Dressed Window Competition and Window Spotting Competition. We continue to be grateful for the donations made by businesses, local organisations and individuals towards the cost of the lights despite tough economic times.

Civic events organised included the annual Civic Dinner, Civic Service and the Cenotaph Service on Remembrance Sunday.

The Taste Cumbria Food Festival continues to go from strength to strength. Last year's event was held between 26-28 September 2014. The Town Council contributed £7,500 towards the Festival's running costs. The total economic impact of the 2014 Festival on the local economy by visitors to the event has been estimated at £1.9m.

The Council's Internal Auditor, Jean Airey, a former Town Clerk of Keswick, regularly audited the Council's accounts and reported back to the Council. This year's annual accounts have been prepared and the Clerk will shortly be sending off the required Annual Return to the External District Auditor. The repeal of Section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 now allows enables the Town Council to finally embrace modern banking methods. Financial Standing Orders have been revised.

The Council continues to employ ISS Waterers Landscapes as their Maintenance Contractor for works at the Memorial Gardens. Allerdale Borough Council reduced our concurrent grant by 50% in 2013/14. Sadly our concurrent grant will be totally withdrawn in 2015/16.

Cockermouth Carnival was cancelled. We hope that the carnival will take place in 2015.

Tarn Close Sports Ground continues to be managed by the Town Council and has been used by Cockermouth Junior Football Club over the past season. The Town Council has now acquired the site from Allerdale Borough Council. Four clubs subsequently submitted an interest in developing the site and secure its long term future. Cockermouth Junior Football Club was chosen as our preferred partner. Their vision involves the creation of a football centre at Tarn Close for use by all teams in the town, junior, senior and veteran serving in the region of 500 members initially. Their long term vision involves the erection of a synthetic indoor pitch to serve Cockermouth and the surrounding villages. We are working with Cockermouth Junior Football Club on a long term lease which will assist them to secure investment.

Play areas at Greyrigg Avenue, Harris Park Extension, Isel Road and Towers Lane have been transferred from Allerdale Borough Council to the Town Council following the threat of closure.

The Localism Bill published on the 13 December 2010 aims to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and Councils by lifting the burden of bureaucracy, empowering communities and strengthening accountability to local people. A range of new powers and reforms will be introduced as a result of the Bill.

One of those new powers is the General Power of Competence (GPC). I am pleased to announce that on the 17 July 2012, the Town Council confirmed that it meets both criteria for eligibility for use of the General Power of Competence as set out in a statutory instrument known as the Parish Council's (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 which came into force in April 2012.

The new General Power of Competence will fundamentally change the way Local Government behaves, giving them the same capacity to act as an individual generally which will enable us to do anything apart from that which is specifically prohibited. This will result in greater innovation and a new more confident entrepreneurial approach which should in turn lead to greater efficiencies, improved partnership working and the ability to help our community in ways previously outside our remit.

The Town Council adopted a revised Code of Conduct on 17 July 2012. Copies of the new Code can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

The Town Council has agreed to adopt and maintain two new bus shelters which will be erected as part of the Main Street Improvement Scheme outside Bet DSL and the Fletcher Christian.

The Town Council has also agreed to adopt and maintain a new bus shelter on Castlegate Drive opposite the new hospital following the receipt of a generous donation from a local resident. The new shelter will be in situ by the end of May 2015.

The Town Council has been working closely with a number of voluntary organisations regarding a series of events planned to mark the anniversary of the Great War. An open air service was held at the Cenotaph on 3 August 2014. This was followed by a church service. Other events were also held, these included:-

A recreation of World War One's famous football game
An exhibition by the Museum Group
Heritage Open Days

The Town Council has agreed to adopt and maintain a flower bed adjacent to Gote Bridge on the Crown Street side. The Rotary will be using this bed to commemorate those lost during WW1.

Our speed indication device continues to be placed at 'speeding' hotspots around the Town.

The Council continues to be represented on the Cockermouth and Papcastle Recreational Charity.

Local elections will be held on Thursday 7 May 2015. Warding arrangements in Cockermouth have been revised as a result of The Cumbria (Electoral Changes) Order 2012.

As of 7 May 2015:-

4 councillors will represent All Saints

3 councillors will represent Christchurch

2 councillors will represent Double Mills

2 councillors will represent South Lodge

1 councillor will represent Fitz Ward.

A community defibrillator has been installed in Kings Arms Lane. The Town Council has agreed to take over the future monitoring and maintenance costs of this machine.

Finally I would also like to thank all my fellow Councillors, Sheila Brown, the Town Clerk and her staff for their hard work.

Sheila Brown, the Responsible Financial Officer gave a brief summary of the accounts for 2014/2015.

Annual Report from All Saint's CE Primary School

Those present noted the excellent annual report from All Saints CE Primary School.

Observations from County Councillor E Nicholson

In order that the County Councillors reports are not repetitious, I refer you to my fellow County Councillor Alan Kennon's report.

With the addition that we also provided funding for the pollarding of the trees on Kirkbank.

This past year I have been the chair of our local committee, service on the Highway, Safe Scrutiny Panel and the Staffing Committee. This is of course in addition to all of the working groups of the local committee.

Like all other Councils, budgets are having to be cut with the consequence that the Council will become a much more slimmed down entity over the next couple of years.

The most satisfying achievement was persuading the Council to disband the idea for charging for on street car parking.

Observations from County Councillor A Kennon

Since the Cockermouth Boundary changes in 2013 which divided the town into North and South Divisions I now represent the Cockermouth South Division which includes Dean, Greysouthen and Brigham Parishes.

Along with these I attend Cockermouth Town Council meetings each month.

I also attend various County Committee meetings which include-

- Local Committee for Allerdale
- Allerdale Highways & Transport Group
- Main Street Delivery Group
- Various Task and Finish Groups

Along with my fellow County Councillor Eric Nicholson for Cockermouth North- We have jointly funded various schemes from our local area allowance to improve the town and surrounding areas.

We have also approved various grants for local organisations through the County Councils Neighbourhood Forum Grants and 0-19 Budget Scheme which are listed below.

This year we have also allocated funding from our traffic budget to re align and improve the Deer Orchard footpath from the Tanyard to the Sports Centre and the hospital providing a more improved route with the Gable Avenue and Slatefell estates.

Local Forum/Community grants

Broughton Children's Carnival	Towards extra expenses for the bigger centenary year carnival	£500
Brigham War Memorial Hall	Towards kitchen renovations required due to flooding	£3,000
Kirkgate Arts	Cockermouth by candlelight project to help rejuvenate the fortunes of Cockermouth businesses	£1,594
Bridge End Court Residents Association	purchasing a shed	£250
Theatre by the Lake	Swings & Roundabouts: Festival of Youth	£1,000
Cockermouth Rugby Union Football Club	deliver rugby / healthy eating programme in schools and the community	£2,000
Cockermouth Festivals Group	Towards equipment for 'Cockermouth Live' festival	£573

Mr Hully commented that the £15k spent upgrading the footpath off St Helens Street would have been better spent on public transport.

Councillor Kennon stated that his allowance could not be spent on public transport due to the loss of subsidy and that he had received a number of positive comments about the scheme.

Observations from Allerdale councillor L Davies

I wish to inform you of my activities in All Saints Ward and Allerdale Borough Council.

Ward Work

As with previous years, the bulk of my work has been concerned with housing issues including:-

- Maintenance & repair
- Difficulties with regard to the Bedroom Tax
- Homelessness

Other Matters

- Drainage problems on the Greenway bridge
- Street lighting
- Fly tipping
- Unsafe Trees
- Estate Inspections

- Visits to year 7 of Cockermouth School
- Member of Cockermouth & Papcastle Recreation Committee

ALLERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

I continue to be a member of the following Panels and Committees:-

- Licensing Committee
- Community Scrutiny Panel
- Spent Fuel and Nuclear Management Committee

At the AGM of Allerdale Borough Council of May 2014 I was honoured to be appointed Mayor of Allerdale Borough Council.

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES – NON COUNCIL

Member of the Cockermouth Branch of the Royal Air Force Association.

I will continue to give you my very best efforts to make our Community a healthy, safe and enjoyable place to live in and be proud of.

Observations from Allerdale Councillor Margaret Jackson

I have been a representative on Allerdale Borough Council for the Christ Church Ward in Cockermouth for the last 16 years.

I am a member of Allerdale's Full Council, the Development Panel and the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Development Panel

The majority of planning application decisions are made by officers, but there are occasions that officers feel the panel need to make the decision, e.g. if it is outside planning policy or a major application. We also look at applications that have been called in by Councillors.

There has been an increased in applications being looked at by the Panel so we are now meeting every 3 weeks.

We look at changes to planning policies made by the Government.

We are now using the new National Planning Policy Framework and the new Allerdale Local Plan in making decisions.

The Site Allocations Document which designated specific areas and sites for a range of uses has been out for its second consultation and I look forward to using the final document in our decision.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The work plan for this committee includes monitoring and reviewing the quarterly performance report, monitoring the impact and implications of the Welfare Reform Act.

A sub committee was set up to look at changes in Footway Lighting maintenance, the committee submitted a report with options on the way forward and this was presented to the Executive for them to make a decision.

We started a Health Care Reform Review looking at four themes, reducing the level of childhood obesity, reducing the amount of incidents of alcohol specific hospital stays for under 18's, reducing levels of smoking and related deaths, increase life expectancy/aging well/living longer, healthier lives.

A workshop was organised where the Health and Wellbeing Board, Health and Wellbeing Group, Health Scrutiny Committee and the Clinical Commissioning Group be invited to discuss the four themes.

We looked at the Improving Health and Wellbeing Strategy and in particular Aging Well where Colin Cox, the Director of Public Health at Cumbria County Council attended a meeting to present on the Aging Well Agenda. We also refreshed the Reducing Poverty Strategy. We looked at a call in of a report that had gone to the Executive which was on investment into Moorclose. This was resolved as it had been misinterpreted.

I have also dealt with a number of problems reported to me by the people of Cockermouth and look forward to continuing to represent them.

Mr Hully asked Councillor Jackson what she will do to improve her attendance.

Mrs Jackson stated that she did not wish to discuss her personal circumstances around this table.

Observations from the Leader of Allerdale Alan Smith

As Leader of Allerdale Borough Council, I do not have a portfolio to report on, as such, along with no committees.

I will outline what actions have been taken over the last 12 months regarding Cockermouth:-

- £5000 and officer support for 2014 Taste Cumbria

- Walk-rounds and Joint Action Group meetings take place quarterly to ensure co-ordinated action taken on street scene issues
- Two hours free car parking in Wakefield Road, Sullart Street, Bitter Beck and Riverside Car Parks whilst the Main Street Improvement Works were undertaken
- Car Parking Permits for households affected by the Main Street works.
- A new footpath on St Helen's Street that leads to the Sports Centre and Hospital has been created which will also link onto the new footpath around Deer Orchard.
- Reinstated the turnaround/car park at Bellbrigg Lanning for Cemetery users
- 10p swims provided for children during school holidays
- Supported the Kirkgate financially to help them reach their targets for funding.
- £10k Town Centre funding administered by the Town Council
- Funding and officer support for 'Cockermouth by Candlelight'.

Mr Hully asked Mr Smith what Allerdale was putting in to public transport?

Councillor Smith informed him that Allerdale Borough Council had set aside £10,000 to help sustain/improve bus services in villages. He urged passengers to use bus services or lose them.

Observations from Allerdale Councillor Christine Smith

It has been a privilege to represent All Saints again for the past 12 months.

I am a member of the Borough's Standards Committee.

I am also a member of both Corporate and Community Scrutiny Committees, which I find very interesting.

I have 100% attendance for Full Council.

I am still involved with the two other ward councillors who have been supporting the Highfield Residents Association and Highfield FC to decant to the changing rooms, which have finally been refurbished, well done to the Residents Association for all their hard work, in delivering their community facility.

Housing is still a problem in the CA13 area, I have taken and acted on calls from people desperate for a home and will continually do so.

Some of the other projects in the past 12 months, Allendale have supported 10p swims at the Sports Centre during school holidays, the integrated footpath to help residents get to the sports centre and doctors surgery. 'Discover Your Cockermouth' booklet produced and distributed with Cumbrian Newspapers.

Observations from Councilor S Standage

I wish to inform you that I am standing down as a candidate for Allerdale Borough Council in the election taking place on the 7 May 2015.

I am honored to have, over many years, been your representative of both All Saints and Christ Church Wards as their Allerdale Borough Councillor.

Development Panel

I currently serve on the Development Panel which also includes the site inspection panel.

The Development Panel continues to meet on a regular basis. The procedures remain as previous; that is to say the majority of planning decisions are taken under delegated officer powers. Other applications are either brought to the attention of the Development Panel by planning officers or 'called in' by a councillor, whether or not they are on the Development Panel. The reasons for the 'call in' vary from major planning developments to concerns regarding the environment, over development, in a conservation area or listed building concerns etc. The call in procedure thus enables applicants, objectors and members of the public the opportunity to come before the Panel and express their opinions on individual applications.

I would again state that in my opinion this particular process with Allerdale Borough Council is of great benefit to Allerdale's Development Panel members, its constituents and the applicants and shows a true commitment to local open government.

Standards Committee

I also serve on the Standards committee. The committee consists of Allerdale Members, Parish representatives and non-council members.

Functions of this committee are as follows:-

The promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct within the Council
To determine the arrangements and guidance for dealing with any code of conduct matters
To determine any allegations of a breach of protocols by Allerdale and Parish members in accordance with procedures adopted by the Council

All functions relating to standards of conduct of members under any relevant legislation or regulations

Granting dispensations to councillors and co-opted members from the requirement relating to interests set out in the Members Code of Conduct

Outside Bodies

I am also pleased to represent the Council on the following:-

Port of Workington Board
Cumbria Community Foundation

I would wholeheartedly take this opportunity to thank all who have supported me over the past years.

Cockermouth and Papcastle Recreational Trust

The Town Clerk outlined the activities of the Trust over the last 12 months. She indicated that the Trust was always happy to receive applications from local organizations who might qualify for funding.

Questions of which 48 hours written notice had been given

None were received.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm