

MARYPORT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 9th February 2015 in the Council Chambers, Town Hall, Maryport at 7.00pm.

Present

Councillor B Campbell	Councillor B Carter
Councillor Mrs A Kendall	Councillor P Kendall
Councillor A Moore	Councillor W Pegram
Councillor Mrs L Radcliffe	Councillor Ms C Tindall (Chairman)
Councillor L Williamson	Councillor Mrs J Wood
Councillor M Wood	

In Attendance

Mr P Bramley (Clerk)
Mrs V Patterson (Press)

44/14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Ashworth, Mrs C McCarron Holmes & G McAlpine.

45/14 Declarations of Interest

A declaration of interest was received from P Bramley, Clerk, Item 10, Personal & Prejudicial Interest as an employee of Maryport Town Council.

46/14 Requests for Dispensations

None received.

47/14 Minutes of Meeting held on 24 November 2014

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 November 2014 be confirmed as a correct record & signed by the Chairman.

48/14 Minutes of Meeting held on 12 January 2015

Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record & signed by the Chairman.

49/14 Council Business Strategy

The Council's consultant, Chris Kolek, presented a report to the Council which provided a synopsis of work carried out. The work was supported by National Lottery funding as a dedicated project to increase engagement with the community through a variety of means, including multiple drop in sessions, online surveys, social media, focus group meetings and a household marketing campaign. Over a period of several months, the project had promoted interest in the work of the Town Council and had used participation techniques to empower the local community, both by helping them to understand the role of local government and by enabling them to influence Town Council priorities through the preparation of a new strategy.

From the consultations, and the survey in particular, more had been learned about people's current understanding and awareness of the work of the Town Council, and had been heard about the challenges and opportunities that people considered to be the priorities for the Council going forward. When asked what the Town Council currently did, many respondents had found it difficult to differentiate between the functions of the Town, Borough and County Councils, but those functions most commonly associated with the Town Council were generally identified correctly.

From a list of the activities currently undertaken by the Town Council, people in the Maryport area had been asked how important each of those activities was to them. Activities considered to be 'very important' included funding towards activities to promote Maryport, organising the annual Remembrance Day, and the financial support given to local organisations. Those considered to be less important were the maintenance of the Coke Ovens, Fishy Tales and the provision of Allotments.

The findings presented a challenge for the Town Council. How could it explain why some activities were still in the public's interest, even when they were not regarded as a priority by many local people? When asked if they were satisfied with the Town Council's delivery of these services, the responses had largely reflected the levels of importance they attached to each activity. In other words, if the activity was considered to be of low importance, then there tended to be low satisfaction with the Council's delivery of that activity.

Looking beyond the services and activities delivered through the Town Council, the consultations had asked about people's satisfaction with a broader range of services and activities, specifically those provided in Maryport through various public service contracts. This had produced mixed results, with reasonably good levels of satisfaction with litter and refuse management services, and with public transport, but there was much less satisfaction with the maintenance of safe clean public roads, footpaths, the promenade and toilets.

Responses that had indicated a lack of importance or low levels of satisfaction with some of the Town Council's current activities might easily be interpreted as a desire to see the Council do less and perhaps spend less. However, the responses received when people had been asked directly if they thought the Town Council should carry out fewer activities and spend less money were a resounding 'no', (86.1%). In fact, a small majority, (57.5%), had said that they would like to see the Council carry out even more activities, even if that meant spending more. When asked how these "additional activities" might be paid for, most respondents had been reluctant to see an increase in precept, (although almost one in four did suggest it), and had focused instead on alternative sources of funding, principally, lottery funding. It was considered that this may demonstrate some understanding that austerity measures had, in recent years, weakened the role of local authorities and public bodies as funders.

The consultations had gathered hundreds of detailed questionnaire responses and thousands of comments, including those from the focus groups, drop-ins and public meetings. From those it had been possible to combine some common areas of concern, to identify the key challenges and to highlight the main opportunities for the Town Council. The consultations had revealed five areas of priority for the Town Council Strategy to address. These could be summarised as:

- 1) Town centre improvements & management.
- 2) Environmental improvements to the Promenade area.
- 3) Cleaning up litter, dog fouling, chewing gum, weeds, etc.
- 4) Support for festivals & events.
- 5) More things to do for all age groups but especially the young.

From the outset, the project had recognised the need to spread the word about Maryport Town Council, to improve inhabitants' awareness and understanding of what the Town Council did, and to encourage local people to take more of an interest and hopefully become more active in the business of the Council. The need for more effective communications was considered vitally important and therefore had to be integral to the Town Council's Strategy. It was considered that the findings should be used to inform the work of the Town Council and should be addressed within the new Strategy for 2015-2020, with a clear set of objectives and an action plan that demonstrated a discernible link between the Council's priorities and those that had been raised during the course of the project.

Resolved that the report be welcomed, the strategy be developed & a copy of the summary forwarded to Council members not present at the meeting.

50/14 Presentation from Allerdale Borough Council Town Centre Manager for Maryport

Toni Magean, Allerdale Borough Council Town Centre Manager for Maryport, outlined three matters:

- 1) Allerdale Borough Council, as the authority responsible for provision of markets, was consulting on what the area wanted in terms of market services. Market services needed to be supported by the community & sustainable. It was considered that there was a desire from local people for a market provision which complimented existing businesses. Mr Magean thought that a periodical specialised market, appropriately located, could be supported, possibly on Mill Street Car Park, linked to free car parking.
- 2) Limited financial support for festivals was available from Allerdale Borough Council, for both new & existing operations, subject to successful applications. It was important that the Town Council submitted applications for such events that it considered appropriate.
- 3) Further to Allerdale Borough Council's £10,000 funding allocation to Maryport, Mr Magean emphasised the importance of ensuring that the agreed projects be supported by appropriate & timely evidence within the financial year.

Resolved that the report be noted.

51/14 Request for approval of reasons for Non-attendance at Meetings

Councillor G McAlpine had last attended a meeting of the Council on 1 September 2014. Section 85 of the 1972 Local Government Act states that 'if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of that authority'. The six month period was due to expire on 1 March 2015. Councillor McAlpine advised that his work commitments had impacted directly on his ability to attend meetings during the period of his absence & asked that the Council consider those reasons & grant approval for his absence over that period.

Resolved that the request for approval of reasons for non-attendance at meetings over the previous six months by Councillor G McAlpine be approved & an extension of one month be agreed.

52/14 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor thanked Councillors P Kendall & Mrs L Radcliffe for deputising for her during her recent period of ill health. She advised that she would provide members with a list of her attendance at events over recent months in the near future.

Resolved that the Mayor's announcements be noted.

53/14 Risk Assessment & Management Review 2014/15

Resolved that the Risk Assessment & Management Review 2014/15 be accepted & the proposals for the management of identified risks & supporting actions be agreed.

54/14 Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2014/15

Resolved that, taking into account the evidence available & the size of the Council & its range of operations, the Council's arrangements complied with the Accounts & Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006, & that the Internal Audit Plan be agreed.

55/12 Calendar of Meetings 2015/16

Resolved that the Calendar of Meetings for 2015/16 be agreed as follows:

Thursday 9 April	Annual Town Assembly
Monday 27 April	Committees
Thursday 21 May	Mayor Making
Monday 1 June	Full Council, (Committee Chair Selection), & Committees
Monday 6 July	Full Council and Planning & Economic Development
Monday 27 July	Committees
Monday 7 September	Committees
Monday 5 October	Full Council and Planning & Economic Development
Thursday 22 October	Budget
Monday 2 November	Committees
Monday 23 November	Full Council and Planning & Economic Development
Monday 14 December	Committees
Monday 25 January	Committees
Monday 29 February	Full Council and Planning & Economic Development
Monday 4 April	Committees

56/14 Allerdale Borough Council funded work to Fleming Square Lamps & Benches

Resolved that:

- 1) The Council revoke its decision to require match funding through the Fleming Square Residents' Group to support works to Fleming Square cast iron lamps & iron benches, (Finance & General Purposes Committee Minute 75/14 refers), & agree full funding, supported as necessary by a contribution from its Property Repairs Reserve, from Allerdale's grant.
- 2) The Council support allocation of Allerdale funding to the installation of a handrail on Shipping Brow & works to Fleming Square infrastructure as a priority, with the costs of a joint road closure licence for Maryport events in 2015/16 funded by the Town Council as necessary.
- 3) In recognition of the need to progress the funded work to meet Allerdale Borough Council's timescale, (Minute 50/14 above refers), the Council authorise such works that are required to be undertaken as is considered necessary in order to achieve a successful outcome.

57/14 Items for Next Agenda

Resolved that it be noted that a special meeting of the Council would be arranged in the near future to which Cumbria Police & Crime Commissioner Mr Richard Rhodes would be invited.

58/14

Resolved that the public & press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business by reason of its confidential nature.

59/14 Council Staff Appraisal

Note that Mr P Bramley left the room whilst this item was discussed.

Resolved that:

- 1) The continued progress made in Council administrative operations & improvements made in specified areas be noted.
- 2) The Clerks' salaries be increased by one increment with effect from 1 April 2015 to National Joint Council for Local Government Services Spinal Column Point 31, pro rata.

Following the conclusion of the meeting, a meeting of the Planning & Economic Development Committee commenced.

Signed

Chairman

Date