

MARYPORT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Town Assembly held on Monday 11 April 2022 in the Meeting Room at The Golden Lion Hotel, Shipping Brow, Maryport, at 7.00pm.

Present

Councillor S Ashworth	Councillor B Carter
Councillor Mrs A Kendall	Councillor P Kendall (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs C McCarron Holmes	Councillor W Pegram
Councillor Mrs L Radcliffe	Councillor Ms C Slater
Councillor Ms C Tindall	

In Attendance

Mr P Bramley (Clerk)

Prior to the start of the meeting, a minute's silence was held in memory of Ukrainian victims of the Russian invasion of their country.

1/22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Copeland, J Newton, Mrs J Wood & M Wood.

2/22 Minutes of Annual Town Assembly held on 12 April 2021

Resolved that the Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 12 April 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

3/22 Annual Report of the Town Council

The Mayor, Councillor Mr P Kendall thanked the Council's Clerks for ensuring that the Council had continued to operate throughout the previous year when the covid 19 pandemic had continued to affect Council operations. He reported that as covid restrictions had eased, the Council had been able to organise community events once again & he reported on his attendance at schools' events, such as Sports Days, & other events he had been invited to in his Mayoral capacity.

Councillor Kendall reported that he was delighted that the Christmas Lights Switch-on event had been able to be held in person once again & that he had been busy at Santa's Grotto; he thanked those councillors who had given their time to help run the event.

Councillor Kendall reported his concerns at the potential impact of local government reorganisation on the Town Council & asked all councillors to continue to work together & support each other for the betterment of the community.

4/22 Annual Report on the Council's Finances

The Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee, Councillor Ms C Tindall, reported that, in 2021/22, the country was at the beginning of the year emerging from its third lockdown. Following the restrictions placed on public events due to the impact of the covid 19 pandemic in the previous year, it was a strange feeling for the Council to begin to resume a more normal range of services & to provide support for community events once again.

The cancellation of events in 2020/21 had resulted in a large underspend against budget & the Council was able to establish & add to its earmarked reserves, as well as its general reserves, which would give the Council scope to make improvements in the community. A Budget of £372,000 had been set for 2021/22, an increase of just over 1% on the previous year.

Audit reports of the Council's financial management & governance arrangements had been satisfactory during the year

The provision of services continued to be challenging for councils, with both borough & county council continuing to cut back on roles they had traditionally carried out, as a result of the severity of cut backs in central government financial support for local government. The Town Council continued to have a crucial role locally in helping to address the impact of service cuts, not only maintaining but seeking to improve services in the town & surrounding areas.

With the creation of the new Cumberland Council from April 2023, Councillor Tindall reported that it was reasonable to anticipate that the former councils would seek to discontinue some services which they were not legally required to carry out, but which may be considered important to the community. The likely result of this was that the Town Council would need to consider taking responsibility for such services, with a subsequent impact on its budget, although that could perhaps be alleviated in the short term through the judicious use of reserves.

Over the coming year, the Council would, Councillor Tindall reported, subject to any ongoing restrictions, continue to support events & charities which served the community. The Council would endeavour to keep improving the town & its environs & would seek to use local businesses wherever possible & seek out value for money.

Councillor Tindall gave thanks to Councillor Stephen Ashworth who had deputised for her on many occasions during her long illness & to the Clerks Lisa Douglas & Paul Bramley for keeping her involved & up to date during those times.

5/22 Observations of Allerdale Borough Councillors for each of the Town's Wards

Report from Councillor P Kendall, Allerdale Borough Councillor for Flimby Ward

Councillor Kendall reported that he continued to deal with Flimby issues on a daily basis. He had worked, together with Councillors S Ashworth, Ms C Tindall K Little, to bring to fruition mitigation works to address flooding problems in Flimby, & that such works were anticipated to be completed by Autumn 2022. As a member of the Flimby Flood Group, he was delighted to see that work to keep watercourses in the area clear had continued throughout the year.

Councillor Kendall reported that he was pleased with improvements made to arrangements at Flimby Cemetery by Allerdale Borough Council, which he had campaigned to have carried out, together with the contribution made directly by the Town Council, through the provision of commemorative features & seating.

Councillor Kendall reported that he always supported Flimby Carnival & that he enjoyed assisting with its operation & judging. He advised that he found such events a good way to communicate with the community whom he would continue to serve for another year.

Report from Councillor I Greaney, Allerdale Borough Councillor for North Maryport Ward

No report received. It was noted that Councillor Greaney had not taken up the invitation to report to the people of Maryport on his contribution to the area as an Allerdale Councillor since his election in 2019.

Report from Councillor G Kemp, Allerdale Borough Councillor for North Maryport Ward

No report received. It was noted that Councillor Kemp had not taken up the invitation to report to the people of Maryport on his contribution to the area as an Allerdale Councillor since his election in 2019.

Report from Councillor A Kirkbride, Allerdale Borough Councillor for North Maryport Ward

No report received. It was noted that Councillor Kirkbride had not taken up the invitation to report to the people of Maryport on his contribution to the area as an Allerdale Councillor since his election in 2019.

Report from Councillor Mrs C McCarron Holmes, Allerdale Borough Councillor for South Maryport Ward

Councillor McCarron Holmes reported that she had been extremely busy over the previous year following the gradual withdrawal of lockdown legislation.

She reported that she had been appointed as Co-chairman of Allerdale Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had discussed a variety of issues at the Council including the way budgets were set and controlled.

With the award of Town Centre funding both in Maryport and Workington, Councillor McCarron Holmes reported that she had decided that those projects should be scrutinised regularly to ensure that they were on track and achieving the aims articulated in their bids for funds. Already the project in Maryport was somewhat behind and the decision not to go ahead with the Senhouse Street Market Square was sad. She advised that she was concerned about the main street building blight which could ruin all the other plans made. It was difficult to achieve the desired aims with a fixed budget and ever-rising costs of materials but the project must plough on.

Councillor McCarron Holmes reported that she was working hard with Allerdale officers on the Mote Hill Nature Reserve project. The land was owned by the Borough Council but she had managed to get support via the County Council for some materials to complete the broken wall at the entrance to the site. She was constantly looking at ways of securing funding for the project to make it an outstanding site for the benefit of the town and school environmental education.

Councillor McCarron Holmes had been involved with the Local Government Review in arrangements for the new Cumberland Unitary Council and had raised many issues which will impact upon all areas in the Borough.

Housing was still her main thrust and she wished to see the "Down Street Area" properties revitalised.

Report from Councillor W Pegram, Allerdale Borough Councillor for South Maryport Ward

Councillor Pegram had been elected to Allerdale Borough Council in a bi-election in December 2021. He reported that in the short time since, he had taken a refresher course for Allerdale Licensing Committee, which he had served on previously. He had also been selected to sit on the Standards Board.

Councillor Pegram reported that he was standing for Maryport Council & that he hoped to be able to continue to represent the community on the new Cumberland Council.

6/22 Observations of Cumbria County Councillors for each of the Town's Wards

Report from Councillor K Little, Cumbria County Councillor for Maryport South

Councillor Little reported that during the previous twelve months, he had continued to the best of his ability to support the community with the many and varied concerns everyone had.

Highways issues were always at the forefront of people's minds, with the deterioration of the network, which was a concern to us all, and Cumbria County Council was working hard in difficult financial times to meet the demand.

Social housing and the concerns of residents with waiting times for properties, as well as repairs, were another concern, again the housing officers were doing their best in difficult times. Councillor Little was concerned at the number of properties which were being made available for sale due to rising repair costs, taking them out of the rental market.

Local government reorganisation was firmly on the agenda. As a Cabinet member, Councillor Little was spending a lot of time working with officers in preparing the services offer to the two new unitary authorities. Obviously, there were many members of different councils involved in the process at this time. Councillor Little advised that he had not applied to carry on to the new councils, and therefore would finish as an Elected member on the 1st of April 2023.

Councillor Little gave thanks to fellow Councillors for their continued support and to the Officers of the Town Council for their support over many years.

Report from Councillor Mrs C McCarron Holmes, Cumbria County Councillor for Maryport North

Councillor McCarron Holmes reported that she was proud to report that she was the Chair of Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee. This was an important committee of the Council which held to account the Health Trusts, and served the whole county, including Lancashire, as one of the Trusts straddled both South Cumbria and Lancashire.

The committee had looked at Dentistry, Mental Health ward closures, Cancer service provision and the lack of GP practices' face to face appointments for patients.

The Covid pandemic had also been discussed and the work of the Director of Health and many other professionals had given evidence.

Maryport Parkside EPH was now undergoing revitalisation costing over £1million and would re-open in July. Councillor McCarron Holmes was so proud of this provision for the community's elderly, which she had been involved with.

Over £900,000 had been spent on the Salt pans coastal erosion problems, making the B5300 road useable at all times. Coastal erosion was a worrying issue for us living on the coast and required a strong voice at all times

Councillor McCarron Holmes thanked her colleagues on Maryport Town Council for the support they give her in her work on Allerdale and the County Council.

7/22 Statements & Reports from representatives on Organisations in the Town

Report from Councillors P Kendall on Allerdale Borough Council Maryport Regeneration Advisory & Delivery Groups & Councillor Ms C Slater on Maryport Regeneration Engagement Group

Councillor Kendall reported his concerns that, despite a huge increase in the costs of materials, the funding was fixed & so there would have to be considerable rationalisation in planned works.

Councillor Slater reported that the Engagement Group oversaw the Cultural Consortium, which Ms Karen Thompson had been contracted to coordinate. Funding to support a 'Made in Maryport' event was underway & the Group had advised that the project needed to focus on the whole of Maryport, not just the town centre.

Report from Councillor W Pegram on the Citizens' Advice Bureau

Councillors W Pegram reported that covid 19 restrictions had continued to impact on the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau in 2021/22, & that much of the work of the service was now carried out on line, rather than through personal visits to clients. The organisation was financially sound & had established a traffic light system to assist with management of its operations.

Report from Councillor P Kendall on the Fawcett Johnson Charity

Councillor Mr P Kendall reported that the Trust continued to support ex-naval personnel and their widows. He advised that whilst it was a small trust, recipients receive a bursary annually & each had received a contribution of £75 in 2021/22.

Report from Councillor Ms C Tindall on Flimby Wind Farm Community Fund

Councillor Tindall reported that a record amount of funding had been provided to recipients in 2021/22, with every applicant receiving support. Many groups which had fallen into abeyance were now operational again with the assistance of Wind Farm funding, & it was satisfying to support various environmental improvements around the village.

Report from Councillor P Kendall on the Industrial Alliance

Councillor Kendall explained the background of the Industrial Alliance as a lobbying organisation, its relevance to the area & the benefits of funding received.

Report from Councillors Mrs J Wood & M Wood on the John Collins Charity

No report received. It was agreed to seek advice from Councillors Wood on the availability of funds & distribution arrangements.

Report from Councillor W Pegram on Maryport Harbour & Marina Authority

Councillor W Pegram thanked the Town Council on behalf of himself & the directors for its continued support & funding. He advised that health & safety issues were of paramount importance & that own Council grant funding would continue to assist with safety arrangements. He reported the 'roaring' trade of fresh fish, prawns & scallops on the harbourside & wished the newly opened café in that area every success.

Report from Councillor Mrs C Slater on the Senhouse Museum Trust

Councillor Slater reported that she understood there was no role for the Town Council following the Trust's reorganisation & that she had not been invited to any meetings.

Report from Councillor Ms C Slater on Solway Area of Natural Beauty, (AONB)

Councillor Ms C Slater reported that the organisation normally met three times per year but arrangements had been impacted by the covid pandemic in 2021/22. The organisation had linked with its counterpart in South West Scotland, which had been mutually beneficial. She advised that during the year, there had been issues with litter & overnight parking impacting on the AONB. The cycle path extension beyond Allonby had opened during the year, extending to Silloth.

Councillor Slater reported that environmental work had involved the farming community & at Mawbray, new ponds to attract natterjack toads & a small herd of cattle introduced to help control non-native vegetation. Other projects which she had assisted the group with included 'Get Cumbria Buzzing', flower planting & drainage works.

Councillor Slater advised that, following the AONB Group's concerns at the possible inclusion of the area as a suitable site for nuclear waste disposal, it had been successful in its campaign to have the area removed from such consideration.

8/22 Resolutions for which Notice had been given

None received.

9/22 Questions from Parishioners

None received.

10/22 Members' 2021/22 Meeting Attendance Record

Maryport Town Council members' attendance figures were noted.

The meeting finished at 7.50pm.

Signed

Chairman

Date