

# **WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 28th November 2024**

**Present:** Councillor C Hayes (Deputy Chairman in the Chair);  
Councillor B O’Kane; Councillor A Pearson; Councillor A Spedding;  
Councillor R White

M. Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

V. Gorley, Assistant Clerk

Michael Barry, Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth and Placemaking –  
Cumberland Council

Councillor M Hawkins – Cumberland Council

Councillor J Ghayouba – Cumberland Council

Councillor G Minshaw – Cumberland Council

Members of the Public

Prior to the Meeting starting the Deputy Mayor asked all Town Councillors present to introduce themselves.

He informed all those present that there was no scheduled testing of the fire Alarms and gave evacuation details should the fire alarm ring.

He explained about public participation and gave information about conduct at Meetings

The Clerk said that she had been contacted by Councillor Roberts who had asked that an update be read out. Councillor Roberts said in early November he had been admitted to West Cumberland Hospital for tests and after undergoing tests he had been discharged into the care of his GP.

### **2659/24 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor G Roberts	illness
Councillor R Gill	illness
Councillor R Taylor	Holiday
Councillor J Carr	Holiday

Councillor R Redmond  
Councillor E Dinsdale  
Councillor G Dinsdale

Holiday  
Bereavement  
Bereavement

It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor White that the apologies for absence be accepted and noted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That the apologies for absence be accepted and noted

**2660/24     Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Hayes declared that he was a member of the Whitehaven Tidy Town Group and the Harbour Users Group.

**2661/24     Public Participation**

There was no public participation

**2662/24     Minutes of Council Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Hayes that the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**2663/24     Planning Applications**

The Council considered a list of Planning Applications shown at Appendix 1. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that following consideration of the Planning Applications on Appendix 1 that Cumberland Council be informed that the Council had no representations/comments to make. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That after consideration of the Planning Applications on Appendix 1 that Cumberland Council be informed that the Council had no representations/comments to make

**2664/24     Report from Cumberland Council**

Councillor Mike Hawkins from Cumberland Council attended. He said

- The Cenotaph revamp – he was pleased to see it had been done before Remembrance Sunday and now we needed to look at Stage 2. He said this was good news for joint working together
- The top half of Overend Road got reconstructed recently
- He said himself and Graham had met with Active Cumbria and this was funding that had come into the area from Sports England for 3 areas across the Country and we've got 2 of them – Mirehouse and Mirehouse/Greenbank, Workington and Maryport. This was not time limited funding and it was about listening to communities and about what the community wants.
- Children's services of Cumberland Council after many years of being adequate recently had an inspection and had been rated as good
- Public Realm – and asked if the Council had had a response from Michael Barry. Councillor O'Kane said Mr Barry had said he would be here at the meeting

Councillor Pearson raised the issue of Greenbank Play Park and said Home Housing had said they were happy to gift it back to the community but they had no funds. He said wouldn't it make sense for Cumberland Council to take it back into its ownership. Councillor Ghayouba replied and said there was a desire to bring play parks back in house where they could. He said Bransty didn't have a play park and recently they had done a review of playparks to try and get funding and in the case of Bransty a group with CIC status had been set up which allowed them to apply for grants and if Greenbank did that they may be able to get funding. Councillor Pearson said Greenbank was a deprived area and a lot of parents were not actively involved in the estate – they wanted somewhere for their kids to play. He said this play park provides a play area to keep the kids off the streets and it just needs to be brought back into repair. He said it appeared that Cumberland didn't want to take ownership of anything on Greenbank. He said for Home Housing to gift it back it was a gift of nothing and he thought Cumberland Council should step in and look after it.

Councillor Hawkins suggested that Home Housing could be asked if they would gift it back with some funding

Councillor Pearson said the playpark had not been vandalised it had been so well used it was worn out.

Councillor Hawkins asked that as Michael Barry had arrived could Item 14 on the Agenda – Whitehaven Public Realm Scheme – be moved forward

The Chairman agreed to this

Councillor O’Kane thanked Michael Barry for attending and then made the following points

- We have talked about this a lot historically and he thought memories had differed about what had been said.
- The biggest problem in the future was working together because people were no longer just round the corner
- Originally when we talked about the Public Realm before the pandemic we all met in the United Reformed Church and we went round the Town and the outcome was that whatever we suggested ended up back at the Green Market. We also had ideas about stringing banners across the top of Lowther Street and putting blocks at the top end of King Street that said King Street. Because we had lost the toilets
- We had a follow up meeting about 2 months later when he had asked one question “whatever Public Realm activity that comes how will this bring £1 to the centre of Whitehaven”. At the time the feedback that the Town Council was having was that there wasn’t one of the Town Council in favour of moving on the Green Market. We were totally against that but we talked about other things – toilets were always on the agenda because we had lost the toilets. At that point everything stopped and Millom started to go ahead, Egremont ended up in abeyance.
- Then came the pandemic and we were very aware that we had some Public Realm money in the Town Council’s bank and we were hoping to try and rejuvenate some kind of scheme and in our heads there was £50,000 toward trying to build toilets in the Town but Copeland eventually moved away from the toilet idea. So at that point we worked with them to paint the gazebo on the Green Market and we put flowers in and later on Copeland put benches in to tidy the area up.
- Then there was another meeting to discuss the new Public Realm funding led by BEC and for an hour and a half we spoke about the digitalisation of the Town and that was high on their agenda. BEC asked the question why the money was being organised and run by the County Council and not the Town council where the money was going to be spent. That was pushed aside quickly.
- We then talked about public toilets. We were aware that this wasn’t a together meeting – there were various vested interests from other groups there. By the end of the meeting – the last five minutes - suddenly the Green Market cropped up and was brought up by the lady in charge and immediately we asked what was going to happen to the traders already there. The promise was that all details of expenditure and the rules of engagement would be provided to us. That never happened. At the end of the meeting we were given the quick precis by the gentleman who was there and he gave us copies of what he thought would be on the Green Market which included things like lights in the ground.

- At the next meeting I couldn't attend in person but attended by zoom for 10 minutes at the time the meeting was debating the toilet situation. The rest of the meeting according to what I was told – the Green Market was the focus of the discussion and then somebody brought in the top end of King Street to make it more attractive. So there were two areas in town – one near the market area and the other one at the top (Duke Street) where you have cars passing the corner going to Tesco all day and yet somebody said we want to make that area more attractive
- We have now got £450,000 bearing in mind we are renovating our building and our whole building (the old Whitehaven News building which is massive) and in the end will be a community facility and which is costing us about £800,000 and compared to £450,000 which is being spent on 6 benches, 5 trees, a couple of information boards and cleaning of the ground areas that are there. He said the question was again what will those areas bring to Whitehaven.
- Councillor O'Kane referred to the two traders on the Green Market and said if those 2 traders were put in King Street there would be trouble as they would be putting them in competition with shops who were paying a lot of money and also all the accesses to King Street would presumably have to be changed
- The other alternative to move the 2 traders further down the market outside Kinsellas. To move them any further down the market and that would be them finished as the footfall there would be much less than in the Green Market. Also these alternatives would necessitate the whole area of the market place to being closed off to traffic in accordance with the road traffic order.
- Very little would be brought to our Town for this amount of money

Michael Barry said he was there to listen and the email sent to Councillors was just to give the journey we've been on so far. He made the following points:

- We are trying to enhance the character of Whitehaven Town Centre to be attractive to visitors coming in through the visual appearance of the Town.
- He recognised that this was not a comprehensive solution but they were keen to do a long term improvement for the Town and acknowledged that engagement needed to be worked on.
- He said they were also acutely aware of the need of a comprehensive plan for the Town.
- The Traders were a complex picture and they were trying to regularise their status and were working with them positively to find a suitable location
- They recognised that the market had ceased in Whitehaven and they needed to look at how they wanted to bring elements like markets back which could enhance the vibrancy of the Town. Across the board they were getting messages that they needed to provide newer, better and innovative things for the Town. But they had a challenging situation they had to sort out with the tradesmen

Councillor O’Kane said this would cause conflict with the traders as what was being said was that the idea was fixed and it was always going to be the Green Market and asked why they had even had several meetings on this. He asked what this was going to give our Town. He said this was making us all look a laughing stock because people don’t differentiate between Cumberland Council and the Town Council.

Councillor O’Kane said Copeland Council had already funded benches which were in the Green Market and we would get criticised over this.

Councillor Pearson said toilets had been on the agenda for a long time and it was something that was needed.

Councillor O’Kane referred to the cenotaph as an example of working together where the Town council immediately agreed to chip in because we want our Town bettered

Councillor Hayes said the MP did a survey and all people asked him about toilets.

Councillor Ghayouba said shopkeepers main gripe was the footfall and that it was not pedestrian friendly in any way at all. Most people have a routine – they go to Tesco or Morrisons walk up the Harbour and go to the Howling wolf for a coffee and walk back to the car when the 2 hours is up. They don’t think to venture down towards King Street and he thought it was schemes like this where they were looking to make elements of King Street more inviting.

Councillor Ghayouba said it was a start and we need to think that this effort being done by Cumberland Council is being done by the current administration of Cumberland Council to make Whitehaven a priority. Councillor Fryer had said it was Whitehaven’s turn to get a real amount of investment and try and get some stuff to turn the fortunes around. We need to do something and we also need to look at the bigger picture. But this is the start

Councillor O’Kane said his criticism of this issue was working together and what had happened was not working together at all and that this had never happened

Michael Barry referred to the cost and said it was about quality of materials and quality of finishings and the cost reflected this. He said it was consistent with the style standard used elsewhere. He asked how do we get some transformative investment for the Town.

He said it was important that quality investment for the Town was delivered. Anything that makes the Town more attractive and inviting is good.

He said this is a quality pocket of intervention. There were three sides to this- capital investment, the animation and attractiveness

He said there were real opportunities moving up and that it was expensive because it was quality

Councillor Ghayouba said the Government had given them powers to lease out properties where they have stood empty

Councillor O’Kane said what was getting to him was that it had been like cloak and dagger all the way along and he hoped that things would improve in the future

Councillor Ghayouba said in the next 5 or 6 years there was Whittles building

that would hopefully be fully complete. He said the former Park Nightclub was an eyesore. It is about little stages and phases and generally we do try to keep everyone in the loop and not exclude people. He said that all this predated all of us here and we will do better on engagement and collective working in the future and we take on board Councillor O’Kane’s criticism  
Councillor Hawkins said the streetscape Scheme would fit in nicely with this and you need everything to match

The Deputy Chairman thanked everyone for attending

## **2666/24     Finance Report**

The Council considered the Finance report

- i.    Appendix 1 - The Assistant Clerk reported that there were 5 additional invoices to consider on Appendix 1 namely:-

Julie Hartley	£500 Internal Audit Fee
Logan Paul Murphy	£t595 Christmas Lights Fee
J & R Bennett	£1,779.20 Winter Plants
J & R Bennett	£4,450.80 St Nicholas Winter Plants
J & R Bennett	£6,912.50 St Nicholas Plants and Maintenance

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that the invoices shown on Appendix 1 plus the 5 extra invoices be approved and paid. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That the invoices shown on Appendix 1 plus the 5 extra invoices be approved and paid.

- ii.    Appendices 2 and 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that Appendices 2 and 3 be approved and noted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That Appendices 2 and 3 be approved and noted.

## **2667/24     Internal Auditor’s Report**

The Council considered the Internal Auditor’s Interim report.

The Chairman said he would like to say many thanks to our 2 Clerks for all the hard work they had put in during the last 12 months

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that the Interim Report be accepted and approved. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That the Interim Report be accepted and approved

**2668/24     Quote Received for the Provision of Internal Auditor**

The Council considered a report on an annual quote received of £600 for the provision of an Internal Audit Service to the Council for 2025/26 and considered whether or not Financial Regulations should be suspended in order to accept the quote and considered the risks and reasons in 2.3 and 3.2 of the Report. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor White that (i) a resolution be made to suspend Financial Regulations to allow the quote of £600 to be accepted and (ii) that having made the resolution that the reasons for the suspension be recorded and the assessment of the risks be accepted and approved. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That (i) a resolution be made to suspend Financial Regulations to allow the quote of £600 to be accepted and (ii) that having made the resolution that the reasons for the suspension be recorded and the assessment of the risks be accepted and approved.

**2669/24     Quote received for the Erection, Maintenance, Dismantling and Repair of Christmas Lights in Whitehaven 2025/26**

The Council considered a report containing a quote of £24,500.00 plus VAT for the erection, maintenance, dismantling and repair of the Christmas Lights in Whitehaven 2025/26 and considered whether or not to suspend Financial Regulations to allow the quote of £24,500.00 plus VAT to be accepted and considered the risks and reasons in paragraph 1.3 of the Report. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that (i) the Financial Regulations be suspended in order to accept the quote of £24,500.00 plus VAT and (ii) that having made the resolution the reasons for the suspension be recorded and the assessment of the risks be accepted and approved. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That (i) the Financial Regulations be suspended in order to accept the quote of £24,500.00 plus VAT and (ii) that having made the resolution the reasons for the suspension be recorded and the assessment of the risks be accepted and approved.

**2670/24     Quote received for the Erection, Maintenance and Dismantling of Bunting in Whitehaven 2025**

The Council considered a report containing a quote of £4,446.91 plus VAT from Cumberland Council (same as last year) for the erection and dismantling of bunting in Whitehaven, The Council considered whether or not to suspend Financial Regulations to allow the quote of £4,446.91 plus VAT to be accepted and considered the risks and reasons in paragraphs 1.2 of the report. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that (i) the



Financial Regulations be suspended in order to accept the quote of £4,446.91 Plus VAT and (ii) that having made the resolution the reasons for the suspension be recorded and the assessment of the risks be accepted and approved

**RESOLVED** – That (i) the Financial Regulations be suspended in order to accept the quote of £4,446.91 plus VAT and (ii) that having made the resolution the reasons for the suspension be recorded and the assessment of the risks be accepted and approved

**2671/24    WCSSG -Report by Councillor E Dinsdale**

No report was given as Councillor E Dinsdale was unable to attend the Meeting

**2672/24    Christmas Closing**

The Council considered a report on options for the Council's Christmas Closing hours. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor White that the Council close for business on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and reopens on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That the Council close for business on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and reopen on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**2673/24    Whitehaven Public Realm Scheme**

This was item 14 on the Agenda but by agreement had been brought forward and dealt with after the Report from Cumberland Council

**2674/24    Councillor Ward Matters**

- i. Councillor White referred to 8 Corkickle a residential property which had a change of use to an air bnb. In the application this was applied for together with one parking space on Corkickle. However he had received complaints since of said house having several parking spaces for use and on the streets thus complicating things for permanent residents there including cars to the side of which some may have it is alleged no tax or MOT or insurance and there is an allegation that alcohol is being sold on the property with a temporary licence which would require change of use for that building as it is in a residential area. He recommended that Councillors think twice in the future about changes of hands from properties from a private dwelling to a holiday let and also recommends the investigation of this property.

- ii. Councillor O’Kane asked if there was a Home Group Meeting that month. He said he had tried emailing James several times but had got nothing back. Councillor White said he had heard nothing
- iii. Councillor O’Kane said if you come out of Whitehaven at the Pelican Garage there is permitted parking on the right hand side and if you want to turn right you’ve got traffic coming at you and it was only a matter of time before there was a smash. Councillor Ghayouba said as part of the TRO there was to be yellow lines there. On all 3 junctions there there will be double yellow lines
- iv. Councillor Hayes said at the weekend the Christmas Fayre at Kells was well attended and there was a visit from Santa
- v. Councillor Hayes said he had received a report that night that there was 2 cars with their windows smashed in by bricks. They were advised to report this to the Police and the Police are now looking into it
- vi. Councillor Pearson made the following points
  - The grass on no mans land which is a 10 foot strip of grass has been cut but they still hadn’t cut the footpath that keeps people off the main road from Whitehaven to St Bees
  - 3/10/24 a gentleman called Bob Lancaster picked up on the speeding on Greenbank before 5. It was 30mph but the 30mph signs are like half a mile maybe more towards St Bees and there wasn’t a reminder sign of 30 coming into there on any lamp post or anything to tell them they were in a 30mph. There had been numerous accidents at the top of Mirehouse hill where there is nothing there to tell them they’re in a 30mph.
  - 9/10/24 Emma Williamson said she was arranging a meeting re the speed issue
  - 19/10/24 He reported the speed reminder sign
  - 22/10/24 He reported the street light on B5435. This was creating a black area and nothing was being done
  - He said the speed on that road was ridiculous

## **2675/24     Date and Time of next Meeting**

The next Town Council Meeting would be on Thursday 30th January 2025 at the Beacon Portal, Whitehaven at 6.00pm

## **2676/24     IN PRIVATE**

That prior to the following items of business the Chairman moved the following resolution:

That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the public and or press be instructed to withdraw. Councillor Hayes proposed this and Councillor White seconded this. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That the public and or press be instructed to withdraw.

**2677/24     Update on Office Accommodation**

The Clerk gave a report received from the Contractor on progress since the report to the Council Meeting in October as follows:

- The exterior paintwork was 60% complete
- The majority of the timber windows to the first floor have been successfully refurbished
- Continued with the metal stud work in preparation for plasterboards
- Main supporting wall to the ground floor has been demolished, foundations for steelwork dug and poured. Steelwork erected
- Party wall steelwork replaced. The old steel support needs to be grouted in.

The Architect was putting together some design schemes for some of the work that was in the contract and as reported to the last Council Meeting there were certain works that had been discovered that we would have to seek reports for and quotes for these were currently ongoing.

The Clerk reported that in accordance with the Internal Auditor's recommendation a budget, expenditure to date and projection of total expenditure should be prepared separately for monitoring purposes and presented to each Full Council Meeting and this will be done

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor White that the work carried out by the Contractor be noted and approved together with the Architect's design schemes and the Internal Auditor's recommendation. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That the work carried out by the Contractor be noted and approved together with the Architect's design schemes and the Internal Auditor's recommendation

**2678/24     Application for Councillor Ward Grant – HPAG**

The Council considered an application from HPAG for a Councillor Ward grant of £350.00. Where as in this case there is no specific power to make a grant it can be done under s137 of the Local Government Act 172 and in order to do this the Council firstly had to be satisfied that there was a direct benefit to the area or part of the area, or to some or all of the inhabitants and secondly that the Council must ensure that the direct benefit accruing to its area or residents is commensurate with the expenditure incurred.

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor White that as the conditions of s137 had been satisfied a Ward Grant of £350 be awarded to HPAG. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That as the conditions of s137 had been satisfied a Ward Grant of £350 be awarded to HPAG.

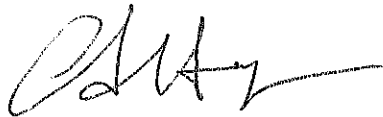
**2679/24     Application for Grant – WCS&R**

The Council considered an application from WCS&R for a grant of £1,000. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor White that a grant of £1,000 be awarded to WCS&R. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That a grant of £1,000 be awarded to WCS&R

The Meeting Closed at 7.30pm

Chairman



*Signed by the chairman  
as a correct record  
subject to an  
amendment to Minute  
2665/24 as detailed  
in Minute 2687/25*