

# WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 27th June 2024

**Present:** Councillor G Roberts, Chairman; Councillor R Gill; Councillor B O’Kane; Councillor A Pearson; Councillor R Redmond; Councillor A Spedding; Councillor R Taylor; Councillor R White

M. Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

V Gorley, Assistant Clerk

Councillor M Hawkins

Councillor J Ghayouba

Members of the Public

Prior to the Meeting starting the Chairman and the Councillors introduced themselves to the public and the Chairman referred to public participation, fire alarms/escape and toilets

### **2549/24 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Councillor C Hayes    | Holiday          |
| Councillor E Dinsdale | ill              |
| Councillor J Carr     | Work Commitments |

It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Spedding 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.

### **2550/24 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Gill declared that he was a member of the Whitehaven Heritage Action Group

## **2551/24 Public Participation**

MT attended and spoke about the rat infestation problems in Whitehaven and made the following statements:-

- There was a vermin epidemic in the town centre with rats living in our homes – not just her but the whole row from the cellar to the rooftop.
- Some people have dealt with it themselves over the years or contacted the Council at a charge of £75 which most people won't be able to pay
- She said they were living with vermin and a neighbour's children were afraid to go to sleep because they're in every room
- This has been going on for years. She said she had lived in the town for 50 years and she had never known it so bad
- She said she lived on Roper Street but the problem was wider than that. She said she had made extensive enquiries and she wanted to let the public know because they had to live with vermin in their houses, kitchen, upstairs and nobody knows about this but the Council Pest Control must know the extent of what was going on
- She said she had seen this problem for years and that it was out of control. She said McDonalds was a hot spot and that they were seeing vermin day and night
- She said it was all over town and was a public health matter and it was very urgent.

The Chairman thanked MT for attending and said the Council would send a letter to the Environmental Health Department of Cumberland Council and the Council would have further discussions about what could be done about this

Councillor R White entered the Meeting

## **2552/24 Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor O'Kane and seconded by Councillor Spedding that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. A vote was held and 7 Councillors voted for the proposal and 1 Councillor abstained

**RESOLVED** - That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## **2553/24 Planning Applications**

The Council as consultee considered a list of Planning Applications shown at Appendix 1 received from Cumberland Council  
Councillor O'Kane said he had never seen as many discharge of conditions when considering planning applications noted and accepted and questioned why there were so many discharges of conditions.

Councillor O’Kane said he was surprised at this and the first couple he looked at he gave up after half an hour as he couldn’t find the conditions. He said when the Council is considering these it would be helpful if the Council could have details. He said for the first 2 or 3 years of the Town Council details were provided to the Council as a consultee but the difficulty now was that everything was highly computerised. He said the question he would like to pose is why are there so many discharges of conditions as for the last 8 or 9 years we have never seen as many.

Councillor Roberts said that across the board to some degree the Planning Department was making it difficult for people to understand and that there was no planning gain at all on any of these applications and there was no indication that there would be any planning gain and overcrowding was going to be a problem. He said he had had complaints about school places. These houses will have children and there needed to be a s106 agreement for this in order to build a new school.

Councillor O’Kane said the new Planning Committee so far as he was aware had only one member from our locality and that it wasn’t brilliant to have such low representation. He went through the process for dealing with a planning application. Following a discussion it was proposed by Councillor Gill and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that the Council writes to whoever is our representative on the Planning Committee and the Chairman of the Planning Committee asking them to note our concerns and also to the Ward councillor for that area. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That the Council writes to whoever is our representative on the Cumberland Council’s Planning Committee and the Chairman of the Planning Committee asking them to note the Council’s concerns and also to the Ward Councillor for that area asking them to note the Council’s concerns.

The Clerk referred to the above comments by Councillor O’Kane and Councillor Roberts and asked if these were to be made the subject of a proposal. The Chairman said they should certainly be noted and then proposed that these comments should be sent to the Planning Department but as it was not seconded it fell

The Chairman invited Councillor Ghayouba to speak on this and he said:

- That he had attended the Inspectorate Hearing the whole day so he thought he was speaking from a position of relative knowledge compared to the equivalent of someone who sits on planning with relation to these planning applications
- With regard to the planning conditions he said he had raised this with Planning and Ward Councillors as he shared the same concerns as the Town Council, the main one being chicanes. He said he slightly disagreed a little bit as there had been a planning gain with these applications but maybe not as much as people would like but there was the issue of chicanes on Harras Moor and that these should be installed by now as the

condition was once they start construction they are supposed to have improved the junction.

- He said there was still a possibility that the junction for 370 houses won't be coming out on Harras Moor Hill. It was still a possibility that they may well be linked up to the Highlands coming out onto a proper signed road
- Although it was not on this Agenda it would be further down the line and he wanted to make sure that the Town Council wrote to the Planning Panel to let them know they really need to push the developers to try to link the Highlands to that development
- Councillor Ghayuouba said he would be very grateful if the Town Council would copy him into that email about the conditions that are sent as Ward Councillors

The Chairman thanked Councillor Ghayuouba for his comments

## **2554/24 Report from Cumberland Council**

Councillor M Hawkins gave a report and mentioned the following:-

- Current position with Whitehaven TRO – Consultation took place on 24 proposals at the start of the year. We will shortly be in a position to proceed with the statutory consultation and advertisement and the public and other consultees will have a further opportunity to comment. It is anticipated that this will take place in July.
- Whitehaven and Coastal Communities Panel – 2 members have been co-opted onto the Panel. They have no voting rights and are advisory. Informal interviews were conducted by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and 2 members and the successful applicants were Glenn Anderson and Alan Burns as they were both very enthusiastic and had a passion for the town.
- Deep Cleaning – As part of CC's Street Cleaning Programme both King Street and Lowther Street were targeted for the removal of chewing gum and ingrained dirt from the pavements and pedestrianised zones. Also the area around Mirehouse shops had been cleaned.
- Operation Respect – A number of events were planned across Cumberland to tackle anti-social behaviour and improve community safety. Operation respect in Mirehouse will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024 at St Benedict's RUFC Club on Newlands Avenue between 10.00am and 3.00pm.
- The Library Service – Whitehaven Library is currently preparing for the annual Summer Reading Challenge. This focuses on 5-11 year olds with a mini challenge for younger children
- Whitehaven Cenotaph – There had been a meeting with Mark Fryer, Michael Barry and Ingrid Morris last Friday and they were very supportive of proposals for upgrading and repair and were going to get costings for the repair of the cenotaph and for extending the area around it and this would hopefully take place before this year's Remembrance Sunday

Councillor Ghayuouba said that the Community Panel undertook a survey about

what were the priorities for people in the area and what came out was playparks. He said three areas had been identified namely

- Bransty
- Jericho
- Kells

He said they were going to apply for funding for equipment and were looking to get one built at Bransty. He said they were looking to get money from developers and to get planning gain from developers

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hawkins and Councillor Ghayouba for attending

## **2555/24 Finance Report**

The Council considered a Finance report

- i. Appendix 1 - The Assistant Clerk reported that there were 9 additional invoices to consider on Appendix 1 namely:-

|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| V Gorley         | £2.99 for bin bags           |
| V Gorley         | £27.54 mileage 3x to tip     |
| Eden Spring      | £4.92 bottled water          |
| G&M Lawson       | £186.00 hire generator       |
| Fluid Production | £1,357.40 Science Show Tec.  |
| Online Systems   | £2,700 share point migration |
| Seymour Services | £500 office removal          |
| Seymour Services | £350 event equipment         |
| M Jewell         | £12.00 packing boxes         |

It was proposed by Councillor Gill and seconded by Councillor Taylor that the invoices shown on Appendix 1 plus the 9 extra invoices be approved and paid. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That the invoices shown on Appendix 1 plus the 9 extra invoices be approved and paid.

- ii. Appendices 2 and 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Gill and seconded by Councillor Taylor 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.

## **2556/24 Offer of Oversized Dog Sculpture**

The Council considered an offer of a public sculpture in the form of an oversized dog which could be delivered at a cost of £1200. The Council owned

no land on which to site the sculpture nor was there a budget for this. Following a discussion it was proposed by Councillor Gill and seconded by Councillor Spedding that the offer be not accepted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That the offer be not accepted

**2557/24**     **Allotments**

The Council considered a report on a request received to occupy the vacant disabled adapted allotment plot on Midgey. The request was received from a person who had disabilities and an email was sent to the Allotments Advisory Group about this and Councillor Gill and Councillor Spedding agreed that the plot should be leased to the person. It was proposed by Councillor Taylor and seconded by Councillor Gill that the vacant adapted allotment plot on Midgey be leased to the person who had applied. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That the vacant adapted allotment plot on Midgey be leased to the person who had applied.

**2558/24**     **Subscription to Rural Market Towns Group**

The Council considered a report on the annual subscription to the Rural Market Towns Group which was now due for renewal. The Council first paid the subscription last year and decided that this should be reviewed at the end of the first year. Following a discussion it was proposed by Councillor Gill and seconded by Councillor Taylor that the subscription of £164.40 including VAT to the Rural Market Towns Group for the forthcoming year be paid. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That the subscription of £164.40 including VAT to the Rural Market Towns Group for the forthcoming year be paid.

**2559/24**     **Tribute to the Geese Sculpture**

The Chairman had agreed that this matter could be discussed and the Clerk had handed some documents to Councillors regarding email received from Claire Murphy who felt strongly about the death of one of the geese on the harbourside. The Clerk read out the emails from Claire Murphy who thought it would be a nice idea to pay homage to the three who have lived on the harbour for a lot of years – possibly a sculpture or a painting dedicated to show how much we care for our wildlife and urban animals. She said she was thinking of trying to get a piece of artwork made using local materials to pay homage to the third goose whose life was cruelly taken to take pride of place on the Harbour. She said she had approached local artists to have something made possibly out of Honister slate and was going to set up a go fund me page to fund this but had no idea of the cost. She thought she might need to work with the Town Council on this but

she didn't really know where to start hence why she was reaching out to the Town Council first as she was looking for some advice/pointers.

Claire also submitted some pictures of geese sculptures.

The Clerk stated that there was no budget for anything like this; the Council owned no land on which to place a sculpture and any Council Grant could only be awarded to a properly constituted group. Following a discussion on this it was proposed by Councillor Taylor and seconded by Councillor Gill (i) that the Council agrees with the sentiments expressed (ii) That the emails from Claire Murphy be forwarded to the Harbour Commissioners to see if they can help as they own the land on the Harbour and (iii) That the Council's representative on the Harbour Users Group put this forward as an Agenda item for the next Meeting of the Harbour Users Group. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - (i) That the Council agrees with the sentiments expressed (ii) That the emails from Claire Murphy be forwarded to the Harbour Commissioners to see if they can help as they own the land on the Harbour and (iii) That the Council's representative on the Harbour Users Group put this forward as an Agenda item for the next Meeting of the Harbour Users Group.

#### **2564/24 Bench on King Street**

The Chairman had agreed that this matter could be discussed and the Clerk had previously circulated and also read out a letter received from Mr Csomor regarding the bench outside his shop premises and referred to previous times when this had been discussed by the Council following communications received from Cumberland Council. It was proposed by Councillor O'Kane and seconded by Councillor Gill that Mr Csomor be thanked for his letter and be asked to make certain that all communications in future regarding this situation are referred to Cumberland Council as the Town Council has been advised this by Cumberland Council who control all street furniture settings. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** - That Mr Csomor be thanked for his letter and be asked to make certain that all communications in future regarding this situation are referred to Cumberland Council as the Town Council has been advised this by Cumberland Council who control all street furniture settings

#### **2565/24 Councillor Ward Matters**

- i. Councillor O'Kane referred to 3 matters
  - Home Group and rats. He said we should ask Home Group to come to the next Council Meeting as there were so many issues to deal with and there was a significant outbreak of rat infestation on Bransty and the local Environment Health Department was doing their best on this and time and time again we are meeting a

complete blank from Home Group and that dealing with Home Group was difficult. He said that as a Councillor he couldn't talk to the local manager and couldn't access the Home Group Offices in town. So maybe in the future we could consider inviting Home Group to a Council Meeting to discuss these matters.

- The grass situation. He said moving from St Benedicts driving back down on that new stretch of road by the Golf Club at the moment you see a lot of people going for a walk along where the grass is very high and they are now walking on a road where people are doing 60/70mph and he said it was only a matter of time before a serious accident occurred. He said he didn't understand why only a small proportion of the roadside is cut as opposed to Cockermouth. In our area these areas are left. He said we should get together with Cumberland Council to say these are our key areas so that they know this
  - He said there had been some road repairs just before the Pelican Garage
- ii. Councillor White said he had had a few complaints from Back Corkickle about traffic and the road use and people who park on that road. He said people get out of their cars and just leave them there to catch a train. He said he was trying to get in touch with members of Cumberland Council about this. He said the residents had suggested residents parking permits or bollards but he had received no reply from Cumberland Council
- iii. Councillor Pearson said he was back to vegetation again. He said he had had quite a few conversations with Thomas Lydiate from Cumberland Council over Greenbank Playing Field. Previous to the conversations with him the maintenance of the Greenbank Playing Field which is the only green area for kids to play on had passed to a football team who had no way of maintaining it and so it fell into very high grass and so the field became unuseable. Last year he had a conversation with Thomas Lydiate and eventually he had to admit that the field belonged to Cumberland Council and agreed to bring it back into the maintenance and have it cut and then the kids started to use it again. Then all of a sudden this stopped and the field wasn't getting cut so he had got in touch with Thomas Lydiate to ask when the next planned cut was for who told him that he was trying to lease it out to Mirehouse Football Team and for them to maintain it. He said he didn't think Mirehouse Football Team should be responsible for maintaining Greenbank Playing Field and they were trying to assure him that Mirehouse Football Team would cut it regularly. However Councillor Pearson knew TS very well and he had said he was thinking about how he would get his ride on grass cutter up the Fairy Path which had bollards on it to stop motorbikes so they were trying to lease it out to somebody who was not going to be able to cut it. He said he understood CC were trying to get it off their budget but questioned whether a playing field really took that much a year to maintain when they had been cutting it 5 or 6 times. He



said he had asked Thomas Lydiate that if Greenbank maintained the Playing Field they could then let other people use it and was told no the CC would want rent from those people. He said he didn't think a football team should be responsible for a recreational field on another estate. He said when the grass gets high people use it as a dog cleaning area. He said he was getting a lot of hassle from residents about what was happening to this playing field.

iv. Councillor Taylor raised 4 issues

- The bus stop on Hillcrest Avenue where there was a problem with tree roots. He said he had raised this with the local Cumberland Councillor but nothing had happened and residents were having to stand in the road
- The friends of Jericho Park were looking for donations and had asked him if he would donate part of his Councillor Ward Grant (£1000) and he asked if any Councillors who touch his Ward would be prepared to give part of their Ward Grant and that he would appreciate this. He said the group were going to focus on the under 12s
- There had been a number of complaints about buses not turning up and people were standing and waiting and no buses were turning up. Councillor Gill said he had talked to Stagecoach and they had told him that the problem was that they couldn't get drivers because they didn't want to do split shifts
- Councillor Taylor asked if he could be reinstated on the St Nicholas Gardens Advisory Group and the Events Advisory Group and this was agreed

v. Councillor Gill had 2 issues

- Rutland Avenue - he said it was murder getting out of Rutland Avenue and all that was needed was to take away the pedestrian crossing and put traffic lights there and the problem would be solved
- Home Group - he said Home Group had previously attended a Council Meeting and they promised the world and then forgot about it. So he welcomed that the Council was going to ask them to attend again to see what could be done

vi. Councillor Roberts – had two issues

- He had received a complaint from a lady who was walking a dog on the top park which was managed by the Woodland Trust and said it was a quagmire up there and was absolutely dreadful waking to the Loop Road so could we ask the Woodland Trust to put some bark or chippings down to try and mitigate that
- He had received a lot of complaints about the bus service particularly the 02 to Kells and Woodhouse where one person waited over 4 hours for a bus. He said a letter needed to be sent to Stagecoach and said that the Integrated Transport Team at Cumberland Council may be aware of this. Councillor Mike

Hawkins said Denise Rollo was the Portfolio Holder for this and she wants to know about any issues on late buses etc so suggested Councillors ask the Clerk to pass any issues to her.

- vii. The Clerk said that Councillor Carr who had been unable to attend the last 2 Meetings wished to be a member of the Events Advisory Group; Ther Office Accommodation Steering Group; The Policy and Resources and Finance Committee and the Staffing Committee and this was agreed
- viii. Councillor Roberts said Councillor Redmond wished to be a member of an Advisory Group and Councillor Redmond said it was the Events Advisory Group and this was agreed

**2566/24 Date and Time of next Meeting**

The next Council Meeting would be on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at the Beacon Portal at 6.00pm

**2567/24 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 Gill proposed this and Councillor Roberts seconded this. A vote was held and it was unanimously

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

**2568/24 Office Accommodation**

Further to Minute 2490/24 the Clerk gave the following report

- The Contract for the building works to the Council's building was signed last week and the works would take one year.
- The Party Wall Agreement had been signed
- The Contractors would be taking possession of the building on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024
- The office furniture had been taken to the Council's storage unit
- The Civic Regalia was being stored by Cumberland Council in a secure area. When the Civic Regalia was required the Mayor would give sufficient notice to CC in order to collect and return it and this would be logged.
- While the offices are closed staff will be working from home and can be contacted on the usual office telephone numbers 01946 67366 and 01946 66992 and email [clerk@whitehaventowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@whitehaventowncouncil.co.uk)

**2569/24**     **Application for Grant RYT&SH**

The Council considered an application for a grant of £997.20 from RYT&SH. The grant was under section 137 of the Local Government Act whereby the Council had to be satisfied that there would be direct benefit to the area or part of the area or to some or all of the inhabitants and also that the Council had to ensure that the direct benefit accruing to its area or its residents was commensurate with the expenditure incurred. It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Roberts that as the Grant Application complied with the conditions of s 137 a grant of £ 997.20 be awarded to RYT&SH. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That as the Grant Application complied with the conditions of s137 a grant of £997.20 be awarded to RYH&SH.

**2570/24**     **Application for Grant – WTG**

The Council Considered an application for a grant of £1,000 from WTG. The grant was under section 137 of the Local Government Act whereby the Council had to be satisfied that there would be direct benefit to the area or part of the area or to some or all of the inhabitants and also that the Council had to ensure that the direct benefit accruing to its area or its residents was commensurate with the expenditure incurred. It was proposed by Councillor Gill and seconded by Councillor Spedding that as the Grant Application complied with the conditions of s 137 a grant of £ 1,000 be awarded to WTG. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That as the Grant Application complied with the conditions of s 137 a grant of £ 1,000 be awarded to WTG.

**2571/24**     **Application for Grant – WADAOS**

The Council considered an application for a grant of £1000 from WADAOS. It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Roberts that a grant of £1,000 be awarded to WADAOS. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That a grant of £1,000 be awarded to WADAOS

**2572/24**     **Application for Councillor Ward Grant**

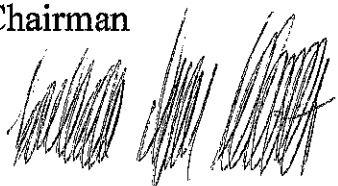
The Council considered an application for a Councillor Ward Grant of £400 from BBCGG because the expenditure was under s137 of the Local Government Act whereby the Council had to be satisfied that there would be direct benefit to the area or part of the area or to some or all of the inhabitants and also that the

Council had to ensure that the direct benefit accruing to its area or its residents was commensurate with the expenditure incurred. It was proposed by Councillor Taylor and seconded by Councillor White that as the Grant Application complied with the conditions of s 137 a Councillor Ward Grant of £ 400 be awarded to BBCGG. A vote was held and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – That as the Councillor Ward Grant Application complied with the conditions of s 137 s grant of £400 be awarded to BBCGG.

The Meeting closed at 7.35pm

Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, scribbled lines that form a cursive, illegible name.