

APPLEBY-IN-WESTMORLAND TOWN COUNCIL

Sue Gilbertson: Town Clerk
Town Clerk's Office
Telephone: 017683 51177
Email: clerk@applebytown.org.uk
FB: Appleby Town Council



Town Clerk's Office
Moot Hall, Boroughgate
Appleby-in-Westmorland
Cumbria
CA16 6YB

www.applebytown.org

Appleby Town Council Minutes

For the meeting held in the Moot Hall

Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 6.45pm

Councillors Present:

Cllr Anderton (Chair)
Cllr Chalmers
Cllr Connell
Cllr Heap
Cllr Mycock
Cllr Pape

Cllr Potts
Cllr Railton
Cllr Rooke
Cllr Swann
Cllr Turnbull

Also in attendance:

David Johnstone – Mace Bearer
Town Clerk and Clerk's Assistant
TIC Manager
1 Member of the Public

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Cllr Anderton was proposed as Chair of the meeting, with no objections.

C1/11/23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr Davidson, Cllr Curley and Cllr Pape.

C2/11/23 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Anderton declared a personal interest in matters relating to Fair Hill, as her property borders the land.

C3/11/23 Public Participation

Ian Outram, a resident of Kings Meaburn and business owner of RopeWorkUK addressed the Council. He has identified a property in Appleby, which he feels would be ideal for expanding his business, including a visitor centre, where he would run open days in the workshop. The property is the old brick engine shed, part of Appleby Heritage Centre, which is owned by Westmorland & Furness Council. Mr Outram outlined that he has been in negotiations with W&F for 10 months regarding leasing the building and although no formal agreement had been signed, negotiations had been going well via email. However, after recently contacting the agents Walton Goodland to arrange another viewing of the property, he had been informed that W&F Council no longer wished to proceed. No reason was given to him. Although he has subsequently emailed W&F multiple times for an explanation, he has had no response.

He has come to ask Appleby Town Council to support his business plan for moving into the Heritage Centre and assist him in trying to get answers from W&F as to why they no longer wish to proceed. Cllr Connell reported that he had been approached by Mr Outram in his role as the Unitary Authority Councillor for Appleby, and had made some enquiries, but that he was still awaiting a response from W&F. He understood that there may be plans for Newton Rigg TC to use this part of the Heritage Centre for training, so this may well be the reason.

Cllr Swann commented that it might be because another business has put in a higher counterbid to lease the property, but in his opinion, it might not be as beneficial to the town as RopeWorkUK and

that support from Appleby Town Council could sway their decision. Cllr Chalmers commented that any decisions made by W&F would be commercial and ultimately the decision lies with them.

Cllr Anderton commented that while the Council were supportive of Mr Outram's plans in principle, she proposed that the Clerk contact W&F Council to establish why they no longer wished to proceed with his proposal, before any support is made by the Council.

Cllr Potts reiterated the point that before any further discussions take place, a reason is needed from W&F so that Mr Outram at least has an answer.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Mr Outram for dates of emails and any other correspondence, and then make enquiries with W&F Council to establish the reasons for no longer wishing to proceed.

Mr Outram thanked the Council and left the meeting at 7.02pm.

C4/11/23 Minutes

Ordinary Council Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair of the meeting to sign the minutes of the **Ordinary Meeting of the Council** held on **Wednesday 25th October 2023** as a true and accurate record and the Council to approve any resolutions.

Planning and General Purpose Committee Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Vice Chair of the Committee to sign the minutes of the **Planning & General Purpose** Committee held on **Monday 13th November 2023** as a true and accurate record and the Council to approve any resolutions.

Finance Committee Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair of the Committee to sign the minutes of the **Finance Committee** meeting held on **Monday 13th November 2023** as a true and accurate record and the Council to approve any resolutions. The following recommendations were approved unanimously:

- To accept the Management Accounts for October 2023.
- To add a Christmas Lights budget line of £2,000 back to next year's budget figures and that a contribution of £2,000 for this year's lights would come from the Council finances.

Property Committee Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair of the Committee to sign the minutes of the Property Committee held on **Monday 13th November 2023** as a true and accurate record and the Council to approve any resolutions.

C5/11/23 Unitary Authority Reports

Cllr Connell's report was received and noted, including:

- Cllr Connell highlighted some of the Adult Social Care options currently available in Appleby and it was agreed to share this information with local residents.
- There are also opportunities of part time work helping adults with learning difficulties, details of which are advertised via the W&F job vacancies pages.
- The Children's Winter holiday activities programme has also been released, with sessions in Appleby and Penrith, which has been publicised.

Cllr Heap asked about the A66 walking path, and Cllr Connell outlined that the path for walkers, cyclists and horse riders has been agreed in principle, and although the exact route is yet to be finalised, he understood it would follow the route of the A66 as much as was practically possible.

C6/11/23 Police Report

The Police Report was received and noted. The Clerk reported that she has met the new PC, Andy Watson, who is happy to come to a future Council meeting to introduce himself.

C7/11/23 Mayor's Report

There was no Mayor's report in respect of this meeting.

C8/11/23 Clerk's Report

- **Platinum Playground:** The Platinum Playground group met last week to assess the seven tender proposals received, based on a scoring criteria approved by W&F Council. The proposal with the highest score has been sent to W&F to look at, as they manage the playground and will be responsible for ongoing insurance and maintenance of the play equipment.
- **Edenside:** The Clerk attended Oaklea Trust's presentation at the Hub last week for an update on the development plans for Edenside. Once planning consent is formally granted, Oaklea will be required to discharge the 17 conditions associated with the consent, which includes a S106 agreement with W&F, before work to demolish the existing building can commence. However, they believe these negotiations are almost completed and it is anticipated this will be sorted by early 2024. Oaklea continues to work in partnership with the EA, with the aim of providing a temporary public car park on the site for the duration of the flood works (approx. 18 months), following the demolition of the existing building.
- **Yew Tree at Mill Hill:** The Structural Engineer's report has been received, and although there were other options looked at, the engineer's conclusion was that the tree was too close to the wall and is causing instability and is therefore a serious risk to the public. Retaining the tree would not remove this risk, so the recommendation is to remove the tree and rebuild the wall. The second tree would then have more room to grow, and the area's character would still be retained. The report will be considered for discussion in December's Planning and GP Committee.
- **No 4 High Wiend:** The roof work is nearly done, with only the ridge tiles to be completed. The contractors are hoping to have the scaffolding removed next week.
- **Public Hall Accessible Toilet:** The equipment for the toilet has been ordered, and the initial plumbing has been completed. The electrician has visited to price up the electrical work, so hopefully the toilet should only take a few weeks to be installed.
- **Broad Close:** As in previous years, weekend parking in Broad Close Car Park will be free through the month of December.

Cllr Chalmers asked about the knock-on effect the delays in Edenside would have on the EA Doomgate Culvert project. The Clerk confirmed the EA cannot start their project until the temporary car park is operational, but they are still hopeful this will be ready for a start date early in 2024, but perhaps not as early as January as they had hoped.

C9/11/23 TIC Manager's Report

The TIC Manager gave a comprehensive report about visitor numbers in Cumbria and the Eden Valley. Visitor numbers are still down and have not yet recovered to 2019 levels, however it was a good summer for visitors to Appleby, although it did fluctuate depending on the weather. Resident enquires were higher than usual during the summer, but this was mainly because of information and displays regarding the road closures in town and the flood defence scheme. To manage costs, the TIC is single staffed wherever possible, and is open reduced hours during the winter months.

The Westmorland Dales Exhibition was very successful, drawing in many visitors, but also being of interest to residents, who visited the TIC especially to see this exhibition. The Heritage Open Weekend was also a big success. It was well publicised, both locally and nationally, with some buildings opening for the first time.

The TIC mainly sells local crafts, supplied on a sale or return basis, so as not to compete with other local businesses. It is currently running a Facebook 'Spotlight' campaign in the run up to Christmas to highlight the fantastic range of town centre businesses that Appleby has to offer.

An opportunity arose to put in a full page advert in the Settle-Carlisle railway leaflet which will be distributed all down the line.

Graphs have been produced to show the breakdown of visitors and enquiries to the TIC over the past 12 months, which also shows the rise in the number of local enquiries during the winter exceed visitor enquiries some months. This is often to report issues in town, which are either sorted by the TIC or Clerk's Office or reported to the relevant authority, as well as ticket sales for local events and support for older residents. These figures will be distributed with the minutes.

Plans for next year include a Spring project and the potential of 'Culture and Heritage' funding through Cumbria Tourism.

Cllr Railton asked about progress with the QR code trail and how often this is used. The Clerk commented that two new trails are up and running and others are in the pipeline, but once it is complete, permanent signs will be installed and a trail leaflet will be produced.

Cllr Chalmers commented that as reported in this month's Finance Committee, although the Council subsidise the running of the TIC, he felt the Council were getting good value for money.

The TIC Manager also noted the importance of accessibility and focussing on the positives available rather than what isn't and plans to promote and encourage those with accessibility challenges to visit Appleby.

C10/11/23 Social Media & Communications

As neither the Chair and Vice Chair were in attendance at this meeting, the Chair proposed postponing this agenda item, but deferred to Cllr Chalmers as he had asked for this item to be discussed. Cllr Chalmers agreed to defer this item.

C11/11/23 Horse Fair Insurance

The Chair deferred to Cllr Swann, as he had asked for this topic to be added to the agenda. Cllr Swann requested the item be deferred due to the absence of a member of the public who wished to speak on the matter, and the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair. Cllr Chalmers highlighted that if a member of the public wished to speak on a matter, they were required to contact the Clerk prior to the meeting, as per the Public Participation guidance outlined on the agenda.

C12/11/23 Outside Body Reports

Cllr Chalmers reported that AERG have had 3 flood alerts in the past few weeks and were on standby. In these instances, AERG are in contact with the Environment Agency for regular updates and pass these on to the Clerk's Office and TIC, as well as residents and businesses via Facebook. The TIC Manager added that AERG updates and detailed information helps put people at ease during a flood alert.

Cllr Anderton reported that ACAT had been working hard to get the town ready for Christmas. The light switch on is Friday 24th November, with the countdown starting at 6.30pm and late night shopping and local cafes providing refreshments. Sparkle Day is Saturday 2nd December, with stalls in the Public Hall, and Santa in St Lawrence's Church from 10am to 3pm.

C13/11/23 Schedule of Payments & Bank Transfers – October 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair be authorised to sign the schedule of payments for the month of October, totalling £20,899.67. This figure includes employee salaries and all other expenditure and purchases; and is inclusive of VAT.

C14/11/23 Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

- Cllr Heap gave a verbal report on the Net Zero conference that she attended on 11th September. Cllr Heap's full comprehensive report will be circulated with the minutes. Cllr Railton added that the idea of Net Zero can seem overwhelming to residents and businesses but as the Council have influence in town, the decisions we make with our own properties can affect the decisions other people make. Cllr Turnbull and the Clerk also mentioned a couple of

local businesses who had made efforts to be more sustainable and that they could be used as positive case studies.

- Cllr Kemp raised the issue at Low Wiend and that the lack of stop signs could mean visitors on foot are unaware of cars coming through and that visitors in cars are unaware that pedestrians could be crossing. The Clerk confirmed that Highways have already assessed Low Wiend and we are awaiting their recommendations.
- Cllr Turnbull added that she recently attended the new councillor training session and found it very beneficial.

C15/11/23 Next Meeting

To note that the Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be on **Wednesday 20th December 2023** at **6.45pm** in the Moot Hall.

There being no further business, the public section of the meeting closed at 8.08pm, and the members of the public in attendance left.

C16/11/23 Private Section PART II – Staffing Committee Recommendation

Cllr Anderton reported that the Staffing Committee met last week to discuss the National Salary Awards for Local Government Staff.

New hourly rates of pay for local government staff have been agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. These increases need to be backdated to 1 April 2023.

It was **RESOLVED**, with no objections, for the National Salary Awards for Local Government Staff to be approved and the increases backdated to 1 April 2023.

The private section of the meeting closed at 8.12pm.

At the Council Meeting held on **Wednesday 20th December 2023**, the Chairman of this meeting was authorised by the Council to sign these minutes, to confirm they are a true and accurate record:

Cllr Davidson
