

APPLEBY-IN-WESTMORLAND TOWN COUNCIL

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Appleby Town Council Minutes

For the meeting held in the Moot Hall
Wednesday 24th January 2024 at 6.45pm

Councillors Present:

Cllr Davidson (Chair)	Cllr Mycock
Cllr Curley (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Pape
Cllr Anderton	Cllr Potts
Cllr Chalmers	Cllr Railton
Cllr Heap	Cllr Rooke
Cllr Hilsden	Cllr Turnbull
Cllr Kemp	Cllr Connell (<i>arr 7.53pm</i>)

Also in attendance:

2 Members of the Public
David Johnson (Mace Bearer)
Town Clerk and Clerk's Assistant

C1/01/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr Connell.

C2/01/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in respect of this meeting.

C3/01/24 Public Participation

Mrs Kerry Johnston and Mrs Debbie Lancaster attended the meeting on behalf of the residents of Cross Croft, some of whom are elderly or in poor health, to raise concerns about the proposed Story Homes development.

The issues raised by the residents included the close proximity of two-story dwellings to the boundary of their houses, access to their boundary walls for maintenance, concerns about flooding, impact on the supply of utility services, disturbance by vehicle lights, concerns about the wild birds nesting in the fields, and that their houses will be de-valued because of the loss of their current open view across the Pennines, which will be obscured by the development.

They acknowledged that not all their concerns are directly planning related, but hoped the Council would take these points on board and appreciate the massive impact the Story Homes development will have on the residents of Cross Croft.

Cllr Davidson thanked Mrs Johnston and Mrs Lancaster for attending the meeting and for speaking to the Council. No response could be given this evening, but their comments have been recorded and the Council is due to meet with Story Homes soon, so will pass their comments on. Mrs Johnston and Mrs Lancaster thanked the Council and left the meeting at 6.50pm.

C4/01/24 Minutes

• Ordinary Meeting of the Council

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair of the meeting to sign the minutes of the **Ordinary Meeting of the Council** held on **Wednesday 20th December 2023** as a true and accurate record and the Council to approve any resolutions.

- **Planning and General Purpose Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair of the Committee to sign the minutes of the **Planning & General Purpose Committee** held on **Monday 15th January 2024** as a true and accurate record.

- **Finance Committee Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair of the Committee to sign the minutes of the **Finance Committee** meeting held on **Monday 15th January 2024** as a true and accurate record and to accept the recommendations. The following recommendations were approved unanimously:

- To accept the Management Accounts for December 2023.
- To accept the Budget for the Financial Year 2024-2025 and accept the Precept figure of £159,130.

- **Property Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Chair of the Committee to sign the minutes of the Property Committee held on **Monday 15th January 2024** as a true and accurate record.

C5/01/24 Unitary Authority Reports

Cllr Connell's written report was received and noted. Cllr Rooke commented that some residents would not be happy about the changes to the 563 Bus route coming into effect at the end of March, which meant that the 563 service would no longer stop at Scattergate or the Moot Hall. The Clerk reported that this was due to the Monday to Friday service being extended to Kendal. Timetables are available in the TIC.

C6/01/24 Police Report

The Police report was received and noted. Cllr Curley commented on the high level of youth engagement the local police carry out locally.

C7/01/24 Mayor's Report

Cllr Davidson thanked Appleby Emergency Response Group for their response to Storms Isha and Jocelyn. She also thanked the emergency services and the Environment Agency for their hard work, adding that the two pumps on Holme Street had proved effective. Appleby received a fair amount of media coverage during and after the storms, and AERG had been praised in the House of Commons by MP Neil Hudson for their work. Cllr Potts asked whether a letter of thanks could be sent to Neil Hudson, and at the same time lobby him about additional flood resilience on the Sands side of Appleby. Cllr Chalmers reported that properties on the Sands are now well prepared and that the floodgates worked well.

Cllr Davidson reminded Councillors that any media enquiries received should be referred to the Clerk or Chair.

C8/01/24 Clerk's Report

- **Westmorland and Furness Council Communications**

The Clerk reported that communications with some W&F officers is currently very slow or non-existent, and it is understood this is due to staff shortages in some teams.

We are still awaiting a reply from Estates before anything can be progressed on the repair of the b/w bollards. Both Cllr Connell and the Area Support Officer are chasing this internally. Some grant funding has been identified, which could be used towards the repair costs, but this would need to be drawn down before the end of March. The last inspection of the bollards by a W&F officer took place in May 2023 and although the officer reported back that 22 bollards needed replacing, no report was ever distributed, and that officer has since left. The Clerk has decided that instead of waiting for W&F to carry out their promised inspection, we will conduct our own survey of the bollards, so the Council has the full picture of exactly how many of the 295 need replacing, repairing or painting. Cllr Railton highlighted the importance of green credentials and using recycled material when using composite

materials. Cllr Potts asked about the situation with repair of the Butts shelters, and the Clerk reported that like the bollards, no update has been received.

Likewise, there is still no update from Highways regarding the installation of the cast iron fingerposts and new town noticeboards, as well as other highway issues relating to the Co-op, town centre street painting and accessibility recommendations.

Several enquiries have been made to W&F regarding their newly announced Community Asset Transfer Scheme, including a request for a copy of the asset disposal list for Appleby, but as yet nothing has been forthcoming. Again, both Cllr Connell and the Area Support Officer are chasing this internally. Additional information about the Council's interest in the first floor of the library building will be sent to Estates.

- **Place Standards Tool**

The survey was launched and promoted last Friday, and 57 residents have completed it so far.

- **West and East Cloisters Building Repairs**

Repair work on the snagging list for the Cloisters has been completed and the architects have carried out their final inspections. Some repointing on the West Tower needs to be tidied up when the weather improves.

- **No 1 and No 7 High Wiend**

Building Control visited Appleby recently and were unable to identify any rubble that may have fallen off the building. They have requested that if anyone sees falling debris, they should report this immediately and where possible a photo should be taken before any debris is removed. The Clerk asked if Cllr Hilsden could keep an eye out, as his business is located opposite the building.

There have been some contradictions in the reports submitted with the planning application for the repairs to No 1, which has delayed any decision being made. A follow-up request to the applicant has been made by Planning.

No 7 has an open enforcement case, meaning it is inspected regularly. A report that the building is collapsing internally has been passed to Building Control and they have asked if any additional information is known on this. They confirmed that they will be contacting the owner for an update.

Cllr Curley and Cllr Anderton expressed their concerns about the condition of these buildings and felt strongly that Building Control should recognise that they potentially present a serious risk to public safety. The recent bad weather also increases concerns about the worsening of the buildings. Cllr Potts declared his company had been involved in the chimney removal and asked whether Blackett-Ord would have an opinion on the safety of the building as they had recently carried out an inspection of the buildings. Cllr Curley commented that they would probably not be in a position to report on whether they considered the building safe.

Cllr Railton asked whether there had been any update on the planning application for the Golden Ball.

ACTION: Clerk to report concerns to Building Control and ask why they do not consider the condition of the buildings to be a risk to public safety. The Clerk to make enquiries regarding the planning application for the Golden Ball.

C9/01/24 Audio Recording of Meetings

Cllr Davidson reported that although there was no legislation that stopped Councillors from recording meetings, there was advice on what could then be done with the recordings. Any recordings should be for personal use only, and it has to be announced at the beginning of a meeting that it is being recorded. The Clerk's office records the meetings for the purpose of accurate minutes, but recordings are only kept for three months. If any Councillor wishes to access these recordings, they can contact the office.

Cllr Mycock informed Council that he will not be audio recording future meetings. Cllr Turnbull thanked Cllr Mycock and added that she felt it could affect people's decision to join the Council if they were being recorded by another Councillor.

C8/01/24 Councillor Surgeries

A suggestion to hold regular Councillor 'surgeries' had been made by Cllr Kemp and Cllr Mycock. The Clerk had drawn up a draft protocol for discussion, which was distributed. The TIC Exhibition Room was proposed as an appropriate venue, as Councillors would have 'backup' on site, should they be unsure of anything, but some concerns were raised regarding this being too public. Other venue suggestions were made, namely the Supper Room, Council Chamber and the Library. Cllr Railton raised concerns about the issue of security for Councillors holding the surgeries. Cllr Chalmers commented that the decision should be based on the principle, rather than the practicalities, which could be ironed out later.

Cllr Curley highlighted that with the flood defence work due to start this year, it might be a good time to hold surgeries, so residents had a direct point of contact to raise concerns personally.

It was agreed by a majority vote to trial the Councillor surgeries and a discussion to confirm the logistics will be had at a future meeting.

C9/01/24 Outside Body Reports

AERG: Cllr Chalmers report was received and noted. He asked if anyone had any constructive criticism about the group's response, to pass this on. Cllr Chalmers mentioned that the Grammar School is the emergency evacuation centre, but it might be a good idea to have one on either side of town.

Grammar School: Cllr Anderton reported that the Head Teacher has recently resigned and is leaving at Easter. The recruiting process has begun, and there will be a temporary Acting Head to cover until a new Head Teacher is recruited.

C10/01/24 Schedule of Payments & Bank Transfers – December 2023

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair be authorised to sign the schedule of payments for the month of December, totalling £19,677.39. This figure includes employee salaries and all other expenditure and purchases, and is inclusive of VAT.

C11/01/24 Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

- Cllr Davidson would like to start the planning of the Annual Town Meeting, as she was keen to change the format of the meeting and to invite local organisations to give an annual report on their activities at the meeting.

C12/01/24 Next Meeting

To note that the Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be on **Wednesday 21st February 2024** at **6.45pm** in the Moot Hall.

A meeting with Story Homes has been arranged for 10am on Monday 5th February. The meeting will not be open to members of the public.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8pm.

At the Council Meeting held on **Wednesday 21st February 2024**, 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
