

**A MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL WAS HELD ON**

**WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024 AT 7.00PM**

**PRESENT –**

Councillor Chris Scott (Mayor and Chair)  
Councillor Sandra Hodson (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillor Mary Clark  
Councillor Mary Huntington  
Councillor Chris Stapley  
Councillor Anne Jackson  
Councillor Mark Newton  
Councillor John Hamblin  
Councillor John Crouch  
Councillor Shane McCarthy

Clerk: Emma Ireton

**FC/128/2024 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Ferriby  
Councillor Speksnyder  
Councillor Meszaros

**FC/129/2024 MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 2023**

There was a requested amendment to agenda item 6, finance matters.

**RESOLVED**

Amend agenda item 6 of the minutes of Full Council held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**FC/130/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS, MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TO GIVE NOTICE OF INTERESTS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

NONE

**FC/131/2024 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

NONE

**FC/132/2024 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To receive any representations from members of the public – Members of the public are invited to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes each. The maximum total time for public participation will be 10 minutes. At the close of this item, members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Council Members unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

**5.1 Public Participation**

Representatives from the Laal Collective were in attendance to inform members about their current project, the history of the textile industry. They asked members for some support in gaining information about Wigton's textile history and who they could speak to. Members recommended speaking to Trevor Grahamslaw, Dennis Graham, Sue Allen, Stead McAlpine and Redmaynes.

## **5.2 Cumberland Authority Report**

Cumberland Cllr Lynch was in attendance to provide an update.

### **General Update**

The main area that is being looked at is the mental health strategy, family transformation and the SEND policies up to the age of 25. This will take 18 months to review but all services will be reviewed as well.

### **Highways**

This is Wigton's main area to review. The previously postponed meeting between Cllr Lynch and the highways team has been rearranged for Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January to discuss residents' feedback. There is still a push for bollards to be placed at the fountain and it was noted that road markings are to be done in January.

It was mentioned that the barbers received a notice giving them 7 days to respond about the window not being replaced.

### **Budget**

It was explained that the budget consultation could be accessed online as well as the council tax survey which closes on the 12<sup>th</sup> January.

Council tax is likely to raise 4.99% of which 2% will be adult social care.

Questions for Cllr Lynch included:

How are the Cumberland Council planning for the new Covid strain from Europe?  
The Cumberland Council are aware of the new strain, but the health advisor would need to be contacted for more information.

Why have councillors received such short notice to complete the council tax survey?  
It was highlighted that it was discussed in the previous full council meeting and emails will have been sent by CALC and the Cumberland Council.

Why are there so many potholes around Wigton that are not being fixed? The reply was that there is a hierarchical strategy in relation to potholes with major routes being fixed first. Everyone is advised to report potholes to the highways team online.

## **FC/133/2024 Finance Matters**

### **6.1 To receive and authorise Payments and Bank Reconciliation for December 2023**

Before members agreed to payments there were some questions asked about some of the payments on the bank statements. It was agreed that Scribe would be used to annotate any payments that were not regular payments and be sent to all members.

## **RESOLVED**

Members approved all payments.

### **6.2 To discuss and agree on purchasing a new vehicle for the ground's maintenance team.**

Members were informed that the current Ford Transit van was now requiring regular costly repairs, the RFO recommended purchasing a replacement vehicle. Other options including leasing a vehicle and purchasing a brand-new vehicle were researched but it was found the most cost-effective purchase would be a van up to two years old, low miles and still in warranty. The finance committee had previously approved this purchase of up to £25000 net.

## **ACTION**

The clerk/RFO will use a reputable dealership to look at different options and bring these options to the next council meeting.

### **6.3 To receive an update on the precept.**

Members were informed that the precept application of £390000 had been submitted in December 2023.

### **6.4 To receive an update on the internal audit.**

The clerk informed members that the 2024 internal auditor, Rachael Kelly was provisionally booked to complete this year's internal audit. It was explained that Wigton Town Council still hadn't received the final external auditor report from 22/23 and while it had been chased up the auditor, Moore advised the report was with the partners for sign off and should be ready by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. It was agreed that the internal audit would be booked for as soon as possible.

## **FC/134/2024 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES AND CO-OPTION POLICY**

There had not been 10 electors or more requesting a by-election therefore the council could proceed to co-option.

It was raised that there was no current co-option policy and perhaps there should be one so that a specific and fair process could be followed when co-opting new councillors. Members discussed the need for a policy, and it was agreed that the clerk would develop a draft policy with supporting documentation then meet with the staffing, policy and development committee to amend before bringing the documents back to full council for approval.

## **ACTION**

To send a summons for a staffing, policy and development committee meeting for the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to review the documentation.

## **FC/135/2024 WBJC report – Councillor Clark**

Members were informed that there had been two funerals since the last meeting.

The clerk was asked to create a laminated notice reminding visitors that wreaths will be removed after 27<sup>th</sup> January.

Members were informed of the next WBJC meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

## **FC/136/2024 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE REPORT**

### **Burnfoot allotments**

Work has been completed on the allotments, with fencing being put along the front plus repairing the wooden fence that was there already and a willow tree that was leaning quite badly across the path. With gated access being given to the trough for other allotment holders.

### **Park / Barton laws pitches**

There has not been a lot of play on the pitches through December due to the bad weather. Hopefully with the dry weather this week matches should restart. We require some more sturdier slit times for our multi-slitter machine. I have talked to (Abbeytown) about getting a grant. He said he would speak to the council and arrange a meeting. These needs sorted as soon as possible, please.

**Painting and treating rust** of parks play equipment is continuing. But due to the weather this is slow progress .

### **Machinery/Vehicles**

Some of the Stihl machinery has been sent to W M Plant for servicing, and one of the mulching mowers has been sent in for servicing to Lloyds. Also, some work was required on the small van again. (£190)

### **Schools**

Work was carried out on the schools over half term finishing off the main drive hedge at the Nelson Thomlinson, picking up leaves and debris at the infant school and the junior school.

We have removed all the plasterboard from the green cabin down at Wigton Park. We are just waiting for Heras fencing now to section it off to start the demolishing of the unit.

### **Dalston**

All the leaves and debris have been picked up and cleaned. Every fortnight we clear any debris that has fallen due to the any bad weather and empty the bins in the churchyard.

Work has begun on the Beech hedge at Wigton park. This is going to be quite a big job and will take a while as we are taking about 4 feet off the top. We are going to shred as much as we can using a chipper and use the chippings on the park beds.

#### **FC/137/2024 TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT**

See attached.

#### **FC/138/2024 CLERK'S REPORT**

#### **FC/139/2024 MEMBERS REPORTS**

Councillor Huntington – attended the carol service. Asked for an update regarding the gate at St Mary's.

Councillor Clark – attended the carol service and asked when the cemetery bench would be collected.

Councillor Stapley – asked for an update regarding the pond signs.

Councillor Jackson – reported that a resident commented on how good the cemetery was looking. Mentioned how good the shop front of Baskets and Bunches looked.

Also mentioned resident comments regarding the shabbiness of the matron's cottages and continuing issue with dog faeces around Wigton.

Meeting closed 20:29

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024**