

WIGTON TOWN COUNCIL

A MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL WAS HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 11th JANUARY 2023 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT – Cllrs Scott, Armstrong, Hamblin, McCarthy, Clark, Huntington, Stapley, Crouch, Speksnyder, Stapley, Hodson, Robson and Pitcher.

Clerk: Emma Ireton

FC/109/2023 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Robbins

Cllr Ferriby

Cllr Jackson

FC/110/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS, MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TO GIVE NOTICE OF INTERESTS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

The following minutes were agreed as accurate:

Cumberland Committee held on 6th December 2022 - **AGREED**

Finance Committee held on the 12th December 2022 - **AGREED**

Full Council meeting held on 14th December 2022 - **AGREED**

FC/111/2023 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

None

FC/112/2023 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.

FC/113/2023

5.1 Borough and County Council Reports

Cllr Pitcher:

Was pleased with the results of the task and finish group which was to review the customer service from the previous year. An example was that 92% of people surveyed were happy with telephone consultations and 70% of people preferred an in person consultation. The recommendations for the group have been shared which are **ATTACHED**.

It was reported that lots of things are still in place but there are still some issues to resolve with moving to the new authority. Cllr Pitcher kindly asked that everyone be kind to the staff during and after the transition as everyone wants to help Wigton.

It was asked that if there were still issues to resolve then why did Allerdale cancel meetings. The reply was that this is nothing to do with the Cumberland Authority as Allerdale was winding down no new decisions could be made. Cllr Lynch followed this by saying Allerdale will not exist and no decisions can be made at this point in the year with the main focus being the budget.

It was noted that continuing staff will TUPE over to the new authority.

Cllr Lynch:

Discussed that the Cumberland Authority budget was up for consultation and it could be viewed by looking at the new authorities' website where comments could be made. The budget is due to go through the executive full council on the 1st March.

It was reiterated that moving four councils into one council was a major transition and that staff have been consulted throughout. It was also noted that no resident should see any changes in services.

The list that the Cumberland Committee made in relation to taking back certain services within Wigton won't happen within the first year.

There have been lots of training sessions to ensure all councillors are aware of the responsibilities of an executive member.

Highways are on ongoing concern as they have not been totally cooperative.

The SEND provision had their OFSTED inspection with results due to follow. Children's services had their inspection in November.

Cllr Robson asked if the new authority budget looked similar to the Allerdale budget and whether money was going to be saved. The reply was that no money initially would be saved.

Council Tax increases were discussed and it was shared that the government were recommending all councils increase to the maximum of 4.99%, if the maximum had not been requested then it would be difficult for councils to ask for extra funding.

Cllr Hamblin asked if councillors were planning in person meetings with the public to allow for a presentation, the answer was no as there would be no time to meet and there were too many smaller councils to be able to do this.

There were further questions around management decisions within the Cumberland Authority and how the management and structure would be set. The response was that councillors do not run councils, this is down to the directors and executive members.

It was asked what changes the public would be likely to see, the response was yes and that would be changes in Highways. It was also asked whether there would be changes in buildings and other assets, the response was that the new authority would be looking to make efficiencies.

5.2 Public Participation

None

FC/114/2023 Finance Matters

6.1 To receive and authorise Payments and Bank Reconciliation for December 2022

All payments agreed and authorised.

FC/115/2023 Grounds Maintenance Report

Report was shared and councillors were invited to ask questions.

It was asked why there were cracks in Barton Laws. The reason for this is the building had settled and caused a few cracks which were easily repaired by the park team.

FC/116/2023 Cemetery Update

Cllr Clark provided an update on Cllr Robbins behalf.

There was a picture and comment left on Facebook which referred to a handmade sign which had been placed in the baby garden. The person who left the comment said this sign had been placed on top of a family member's grave which then triggered some negative comments. It was clarified that there was a handmade sign placed in the babies' memorial garden to ask dog walkers to not allow their dogs in this area. It was confirmed that this was a memorial area and no graves were in this area. This sign has since been moved to the back of the wall as a mark of respect to the area.

Concerns were raised regarding the contractors responsible for digging the graves in Wigton. There had been an incident over the Christmas period where the contractors had placed a large box on another grave whilst digging a grave, this box was placed directly on top of another grave which had a fresh wreath placed, which was ruined. There have also been resident reports that there has been poor behaviour displayed by some of the contractors which had been reported to councillors. Councillors commented that the public needed a way to complain. Cllr Lynch agreed to speak to

the person responsible for burials within Allerdale to see if there could be a way to move forward with this.

There was a suggestion to create a Facebook page for the cemetery that would be managed by the main office which would be used to share important information and provide contact details. It was agreed that a page would be created but would not be made live until the WJBC approved. Comments would be knocked off for this page.

FC/117/2023 Park Staff Report

A report was written and provided which analysed the park staff working hours. Councillors were curious as to know what the Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter workload looked like.

Two actions came from the report which included:

- Put a working group together to look at costing external contracts
- Include a section on timesheets that would record HAV times.

It was also agreed that a working group would be put together to look at Dalston contracts.

FC/118/2023 Town Mayor's Report

- Attended all the care homes on Christmas Eve
- Attended Trevor Grahamslaw's Wigton through the time presentation
- Attended Methodist service on the 17th December
- Attended Civic Service at St Cuthbert's church on the 18th December
- Attended midnight mass service

FC/119/2023 Clerk's Report

- In relation to the Borderlands Project which Annemarie Robson is leading on, please can the report she has sent out be reviewed with comments sent back.
- A way of making savings could be to buy a fuel tank for the depot so this is being researched.

FC/121/2023 Member's Reports

Cllr Stapley – Age UK Christmas day lunch.

Cllr Clark – Christmas Carol service

Cllr Lynch – Wigton Town Team meeting. Cllr Lynch also announced that this would be her last meeting as a town councillor and will be resigning as her new role within the Cumberland Authority will keep her busy. She will still attend monthly meetings and provide updates. Cllr Scott thanked Cllr Lynch for her service and help.

Meeting Closed – 8:47pm

Date of Next meeting

Wednesday 8th February 2023