

WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th April 2018

Present: Councillors B O’Kane (Chairman); J Forster; R Gill; C Maudling; J Laine; J Rayson; G Roberts

M. Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
V. Gorley Trainee Assistant Town Clerk

Mr Chris Abbott from First Responders
Members of the Public
Press

970/18 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Guest,
Councillor Lowrey and Councillor Poland

971/18 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Laine declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 19 in the private section .
Councillor Maudling declared that he was a member of CBC’s Planning Panel.

972/18 **Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29th March 2018**

Councillor Laine wished it to be recorded that she was abstaining on this item as she had not been present at the meeting.
Councillor Roberts proposed that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record and this was seconded by Councillor Gill

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

973/18 **Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 6th April 2018**

Councillor Laine said there had been quite a lot of discussion on Minute 966/18 which was not shown in the minute. She said that the resolution was for it to be deferred to seek legal advice. There was also no comment that CALC and NALC had given a decision on whereby we could decide what to do.

The Chairman said that the Minutes were a precis of what was discussed at the meeting and there was no way that every single point that was discussed was going to be recorded

Councillor Gill proposed that the Minutes be approved as amended and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. This was seconded by Councillor Maudling

Councillor Laine wished it to be recorded that she was voting against this. All other Councillors voted for the proposal and it was:-

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the amendment agreed to Minute 966/18 (i) that the words “That the decision be deferred until the next meeting and.....” be inserted at the beginning of Minute 966/18 (i).

974/18

Public Participation

1. Chris Abbott the Team Leader of Arlecdon First Responders and a member of Cumbria Survival Partnership attended to talk about increasing survival rates in the area.

He said that the average for people surviving was 9% and that it had increased in this area from 5% to 7% but in Morecambe Bay it was 14.5% and in Scandinavia it was 60% to 70%.

Mr Abbott said he had been running courses for the public and after each course the people said that they now had the confidence to do the basics for someone who was not breathing or who had had a heart attack and to use a defibrillator.

When the regeneration of Whitehaven gets underway there would be more public meetings and he was passionate to get more members of the public to be able give good quality CPR and to use a defibrillator.

He said that in the age group 9 to 20, 12 to 15 people have a cardiac arrest every week.

He said that there were 11 defibrilators in Whitehaven but sadly 5 were not working.

The Whitehaven Civic Hall had agreed to sponsor Tuesday 15th May 2018 for 2 hours between 6.00pm and 8pm for a public meeting and that he was at the Council meeting to try to encourage everyone to distribute some posters that he had around the area to try and get more people involved. At the meeting there would be power point presentations, practical demonstrations, using a defibrillator then a question and answer session. He said it was all about giving people the confidence to know what to do to save lives.

2. Parents of children who attended Whitehaven Academy attended to ask for the Council's support following the recent asbestos incident and made the following points:-
 - They wanted a full investigation from Bright Tribe regarding the asbestos

- That it was time to get rid of Bright Tribe
- The question was raised as to why the school could not go back to being a local authority school and it could not be accepted that this was not possible
- The money was obviously there but it was not being given to the kids so where was it going
- Councillor Rayson referred to the asbestos issue and said Bright Tribe should be asked for a full investigation on the matter
- Councillor Rayson said that there was a parent forum meeting to be held the next Tuesday and asked if the Town Council could write to Bright Tribe to ask them to attend
- Councillor Rayson said there was a lack of communication and the reason why people would not speak out was because they were frightened for their jobs and she would like to see some sort of protest outside the school and that the DFE would not release any money while Bright Tribe were still there
- Councillor Rayson said with the new trust coming in they could not go back to the LEA
- Over the years since bright tribe were in charge they had got rid of local governance
- Julie and the rest of the team have done so much and they could not understand why the community was not standing up to get rid of Bright Tribe instead of just leaving it to a small minority
- We need to build the school back up or we are going to lose the community spirit and that's why we need the Council to do something and we need to build up the community spirit
- While under this multi academy trust we've lost our community
- If the school could go back to being a local authority school it was felt that they would get sponsorship back and they could not accept that it was not possible to turn it back to a local authority school
- The money was there but where was it and why was it not being given to the kids
- Councillor O'Kane said it was our community and we need to do something
- Councillor Rayson said that there was AMC and reps from the DFE and Bright Tribe. Sir David Carter had said that Bright Tribe must adhere to its Articles of Association and Bright Tribe should still be engaging with the community and that Bright Tribe needs to meet parents urgently
- Councillor Laine said that she was concerned about the lack of education the children have had for years and we need to get a core team together to discuss this
- Julie Rayson said that she would like the Whitehaven News to report that the parents were at the Council meeting
- The Chairman thanked the parents for attending the Council meeting

975/18 Planning Applications

The Council considered a report on planning applications received and shown at Appendix 1.

Councillor O'Kane said he had no comments to make about the applications except that he was concerned about trees.

Councillor Laine said following recent Planning training she was concerned about the amount of time being spent scanning planning applications received from CBC to forward to Councillors. The Chairman said that the easiest way to deal with this was to liaise with Nick Hayhurst and find a way forward.

There were no comments or representations on the planning applications on Appendix 1 and it was

RESOLVED – That the Clerk inform the Planning Department that the Council had no representations to make on the planning applications shown at appendix 1

976/18 Financial Report

The Council considered a Financial Report.

Councillor Gill proposed that the invoices shown at Appendix 1 be approved and paid. This was seconded by Councillor Roberts. Councillor Laine said that she wished it to be recorded that she was voting against this because of openness and transparency.

RESOLVED – (i) That the invoices shown at Appendix 1 be approved and paid

Councillor O'Kane proposed that the Cash Book and Income and Expenditure shown at Appendices 2 and 3 be approved and noted and this was seconded by Councillor Gill. Councillor Laine wished it to be noted that she was voting against this.

RESOLVED – (ii) That the Cash Book and Income and Expenditure shown at appendices 2 and 3 be approved and noted

977/18 Market Report

The Chairman introduced a report on Whitehaven Market. Councillor Laine proposed that this should be in private. There was no seconder for this so the proposal fell.

Councillor Laine said she had some comments to make and said that the market was being run at a loss of £75,000 per annum .

The Chairman said that he felt that there were aspects in the report that would

benefit from further discussion between the Town Council and CBC to look at the present situation and to try and work out what could be done.

Councillor Gill proposed the Council should defer looking at the report and ask for a special meeting with the Mayor and CBC including the Executive member and any other interested parties invited by CBC to discuss the matter.

This was seconded by Councillor Forster.

Councillor Laine said the market was running at a loss, was not best value for the tax payer and was a flop and said it was not about stopping the market but about taking the right people's advice and getting people on board.

The Chairman said he had no wish to go back over 18 months of argument about the market.

Councillor Maudling said it was about how we could turn things around and that everyone wanted the market to succeed

Councillor Laine asked that her vote be recorded and voted against this and said any funding the Council was giving should be stopped immediately.

RESOLVED – That consideration of the report be deferred and that a special meeting be set up between the Council and Copeland Borough Council to include any other interested parties invited by CBC.

978/18

Update on St Nicholas Gardens

The Chairman stated that following Minute 966/18(ii) the company Doosan Babcock had stepped in to help St Nicholas Gardens.

He said he was giving the report as an individual and that the Town Council was not involved in it and that he was giving an update on what had happened.

He said this had happened because of help from Gerard Richardson who had put in a request for help to the Cumbria Exchange and in less than 1.5 days there had been offers from 3 organisations to help and Councillor Gill said that those people should be thanked publically. There had also been an offer from the lady at Cumbria Exchange to spend 1 or 2 days to clean up the middle/rear of St Nicholas in anticipation of the Taste Cumbria event.

The Chairman said that CBC were due to start grass cutting and the flowers would be financed by Doosan Babcock and AIM.

RESOLVED – That this be approved and noted.

979/18

Recommendations from the Whitehaven in Bloom Advisory Group

The Chairman thanked Stan Sanczuk and Ian Latter and said they had been wonderful and would precipitate a lot of action in the future as they had a wide knowledge of what used to happen in Whitehaven. The Council considered a report containing recommendations from the meeting of the Allotments Advisory Group held on 12th April 2018 which were as follows:-

- Enquiries to be made with CCC with regards to putting brackets for hanging baskets on lamp posts

- The Ranger to check on the condition of the existing brackets and to identify where others were needed and to report back to the Clerk
- The Ranger would water flower baskets as part of his duties
- To purchase large tubs/planters/barrels
- Councillor O’Kane to make enquiries with Whitehaven Garden Centre as to the cost of purchasing barrels including plants
- The Clerk to contact Workington Town Council for information relating to their supplier of their floral displays.

The Chairman said that the CCC had been contacted and had said that brackets were not allowed on lamp posts with the exception on those in King Street. Councillor O’Kane said that there had been an offer to build 2 or 3 ships in the next few months to be filled with flowers and there had also been an offer to give the Council a replica of the Angel of the North which had been built locally. No decision was taken on these.

Following a discussion it was:-

- RESOLVED** – (i) That the recommendations of the Whitehaven in Bloom Advisory Group be approved
- (ii) That 20 large pre planted barrels be purchased from Whitehaven Garden Centre at a cost of £60 (inc. VAT) each
- (iii) That a quote be taken from CBC for planting flowers in the grassed over raised flower bed outside the Marchon Club and this be referred to the next meeting.
- (iii) That the offer from the Yellow Earl to sponsor a flower bed for £250.00 be accepted with thanks.

980/18

Office Accommodation

The Council considered a report on office accommodation.

It was reported that the property at Duke Street had since been sold.

The Council were aware of the press report on the future of Whitehaven Library and Councillor Forster said it was a beautiful building and it was something the Town Council could take over and look after.

Councillor Gill said he was concerned about the time this would take

The Chairman said that a larger room in the Civic hall may be coming available and Councillor Gill said that he did not see renting somewhere as being an asset to the town.

The Chairman said that there was going to be a lot of office space available in Whitehaven in the next two years.

RESOLVED – That the Clerk write to Cumbria County Council to ask about the library building.

The Chairman proposed that item 13 on the Agenda should be heard before Item 12 and this was agreed.

981/18

Playparks and Open Spaces

Councillor Laine said that she had met with Alan Clements from CBC and some of the CBC Parks Team at St James's school play park and found 16 needles. These had been reported to her by a few people on social media. She said the public were being left vulnerable and had 5 proposals to ask CBC to:-

1. To undertake daily clean ups of all playparks and open spaces owned by CBC being Whitehaven Town Centre, St James school area, Whitehaven Castle, Castle Park, Kells playpark
2. To make arrangements for establishing safer procedures for reporting and collecting needles 24/7 through a specific needle clean hotline where they can be collected within 30 minutes
3. To roll out the procedure in 2 above across all parishes in Whitehaven
4. To provide written advice on needle collection and disposal in addition to information on the CBC website, and in leaflets for those without internet
5. To have a person dedicated to monitoring and activating these matters so that there is one central point of human contact

Councillor Gill proposed that the five proposals to CBC above be approved and this was seconded by Julie Rayson

RESOLVED – That the 5 proposals listed above be approved and CBC be asked to implement these.

982/18

Council Communication

The Chairman said that the Council had tried to produce positivity. Our relationship with the public is that people will call into the office to speak to us face to face.

The Chairman gave out a sheet of paper and said these were public posts made by various people on a website and anyone on facebook and anyone could go on and look at them. Councillor Laine read out the names on the sheet of paper and Councillor O'Kane read out part of the content of one of the posts which was making allegations against the Council.

He said there was an increasing amount of negativity posted on facebook about our Council and he asked how do we as a Council respond to this negativity. Councillor Rayson said if it is not directed as a formal letter or someone comes into the office to talk about it then it should not be replied to and should be ignored.

Councillor Laine said it was democracy and it couldn't be stopped.

Councillor Rayson said she didn't look at facebook anymore.

The Chairman said his concern was that the Council was trying to do a lot of good work and whatever the Council tried to do is being got at and asked how

the Council could turn negativity into positivity.

Councillor Gill said the best thing to do was to ignore them and Councillor Maudling agreed.

Councillor Laine said you can't stifle democracy and you can't stop free speech and just ignore it.

There was a discussion on this matter but no resolution was made.

983/18 **Corruption in Copeland**

RESOLVED – That consideration of this be deferred until Councillor Guest attends.

984/18 **Councillor Matters**

- (i) Councillor Forster said there would be a big litter pick on the whole estate starting the next day and on Saturday
- (ii) Councillor Gill referred to bus shelters and said they had still not been done after 3 years and that people out there wanted to see things on the streets. Councillor Roberts said that it was being dealt with.
- (iii) Councillor Forster asked where the Council was with the bins. The Chairman Said we were waiting for a meeting with CBC to discuss the report prepared by Councillor Laine and would contact the Mayor the next day to sort out a date urgently.
- (iv) Councillor O'Kane said there had been a response from Royal Mail about the traffic going down King Street who had said they were going to carry on doing it as they had permission from the Police. Councillor O'Kane said he intended to follow this up with the Police to see if they would investigate the Post Office vans going down King Street and to try and prevent an accident happening.
Councillor Maudling said it was not just them it was other people as well and county signs said before 10am and after 5pm and some pressure should be put on county enforcement to give some tickets out for this
- (v) Councillor O'Kane said he had spent 3 days in maternity and was impressed with the facilities and the staff and was concerned that the staff were worried that maternity services were going to Carlisle but that while he was there they were transferring people from Carlisle to Whitehaven because Carlisle was full. He said he did not see how the Council could be involved and that it was just a comment.
- (vi) Councillor Maudling said he had organised with MacDonalDs and Whitehaven Theatre Group for litter picking in Castle Park a week on Saturday He said MacDonalDs had sponsored the event and collected 23 big bin bags and when the contents were looked at it was found that only 2% of the litter was fast food related. MacDonalDs also said that they would help to paint the bandstand in Castle Park.

985/18

The Chairman said the meeting had been going on for 2.5 hours and proposed suspending Standing Orders to allow the meeting to carry on

RESOLVED – That Standing Orders be suspended for 30 minutes.

- (vii) Councillor Rayson said a stallholder in the market had a key to use the toilets and had now been told that the Council wanted them to use the toilets in the Beacon. There had also been an issue of no light in the toilet
- (viii) Councillor Rayson said she had had a letter from year 6 Jericho School on 27th March 2018 when 20 pupils walked round the grounds and filled 10 bin bags with litter. Litter found included a rugby ball, a solar powered gas lamp and a baby's car seat.
The letter said that the pupils thought that more bins should be installed and more people should be involved with litter picking and that more schools should be involved in a litter picking programme. They were worried that litter would harm local wildlife and plants and the environment was in danger of pollution.
They wanted the Council to do more about enforcement of litter and provision of bins.
- (vix) Councillor Laine said that a few shop holders can't get into work on market day because they are disabled and need to be dropped off and that she had contacted Julie Betteridge to see how this fits in with the Equality Act and was waiting to hear from her.
- (x) Councillor Laine asked that if only 12 stalls are used can the Council sell the remaining 23
- (xi) Councillor Laine said that six parents over the last 48 hours had told her that drugs were being given out to underage kids in Castle Park on Friday and Saturday nights and said that it had been aired that the drug spice may be being used. She said that it had been aired that underage sex was happening by older men with younger kids as young as 12
She said A&E admissions on Friday and Saturday nights were with children from Castle Park
She said kids were being drugged and the parents were going to look for them at 2.00am with a torch and finding them wandering around like zombies and that what concerned her was the underage sex as that was rape. She said residents from the top floor flats were watching this and sending pictures to her about what was happening.
She said the park was not cleaned regularly.
- (xii) Councillor Laine said that Bransty residents were complaining about dog poo around the school.

- (xiii) Councillor Laine said there was a lack of litter bins everywhere.
- (xiv) Councillor Gill referred to the market situation and said it was the County Council who insisted that the barriers were placed where they were for safety reasons and Councillor Laine said that if the market wasn't there barriers would not be needed and as it was losing £75,000 a year what was the point. Councillor Gill said they were only there on market days.

986/18 **Date of Annual Parish Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the date of the Annual Parish meeting be 17th May 2016 at 6.00pm at Whitehaven Civic Hall

987/18 **Date of Annual Council meeting**

RESOLVED – That the date of the Annual Council meeting be 31st May 2018 at 6.30pm at Whitehaven Civic Hall

988/18 **IN PRIVATE**

Prior to the following items of business the Chairman moved that they be held in private because of the nature of the business and the public and/or press were instructed to withdraw. The Clerk and Trainee Clerk also left the room during consideration of Item 18.

989/18 **Pay Rises**

The Council considered a report on pay rises for staff.
Councillor Laine wished it to be recorded that she voted against this.

RESOLVED – That the pay rises be approved.

Councillor Laine had declared an interest in the following item and left the room

The Clerk and Trainee Deputy Clerk returned to the room

990/18 **Update on Claim Against the Council**

Further to Minute 969/18 the Clerk reported back on the solicitor appointed and the Council considered a letter from the solicitor.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the letter be noted and that the matter proceed to Court.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Gordon Brown", written in a cursive style.