

WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 26th June 2025

Present: Councillor R Gill (Chairman); Councillor J Carr; Councillor C Hayes; Councillor B O’Kane; Councillor A Pearson; Councillor R Redmond; Councillor R Taylor; Councillor R White

M. Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

V. Gorley, Assistant Clerk

Councillor Mike Hawkins, Cumberland Council

Members of the Public

Prior to the Meeting starting the Mayor asked all Town Councillors present to introduce themselves.

He informed all those present that there was no scheduled testing of the fire alarms and gave evacuation details should the fire alarm ring and the location of toilets.

He explained about public participation and gave information about conduct at Meetings

2799/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received as follows:-

Councillor G Roberts	illness
Councillor E Dinsdale	Medical Issue
Councillor A Spedding	Holiday

It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Carr that the apologies for absence be accepted and noted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - That the apologies for absence be accepted and noted

2800/25 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hayes declared that he was a member of the Harbour Users Group.
Councillor Gill declared that he was a member of the Whitehaven Heritage Action Group

2801/25 Public Participation

WM attended and made the following points:-

- He had sent a number of photographs to the Councillors 2 months since and said he took it that they would all have seen them now – Crow Park – and asked if there was anybody there that thought that that was acceptable for an allotment. He said Councillor Carr didn't get them as they bounced back. The Chairman said the way the Council was going to proceed was that every time a question was asked by someone they would get an answer back in writing from the Clerk after the Meeting
- WM asked if there was anybody that thought that was acceptable for allotments. There was no response to the question and WM said he took it that the answer was no
- WM said that last year he sent 2024 photographs in - about 10 of them there was. He said he had sent 20-25 in this year and the only difference was the date on them and asked why those allotments had not been put right in 12 months. The Chairman said he would get a response from the Clerk in writing
- WM said this week someone up at the gardens had raised the question on Plot 12 and they thought it had been allocated. He said if it has why hasn't an eviction notice been given as it is completely wild. He said it was full of weeds and anytime now Plots 13, 14, 15 and 16 were going to be covered in weeds
- WM said down at the bottom end of the allotments now we have got a weed that's come in – mares tail. He said it was a historic weed and takes some getting shot of and it was creeping through from one allotment to another. He said he had it now off the allotment below him and people to the right of him have got it off that same allotment. He said he had had to get some special weedkiller to kill it - £62 a litre and it had killed it or rather it had got it held for now but it would come back through unless that person sprayed his garden
- WM said Councillor Hayes the last time he was up at Crow Park mentioned that any issues that happened on the allotments it was the Councillors that made the decisions not the Clerks and that was wrong because about 18 months ago the Clerk arranged for a full sized JCB to come in and dig 2 plots up cut the car park off at 90% and the Councillors knew nothing about it

The Chairman said the 3 minutes for public participation were up and that WM would receive correspondence from the Clerk. He said in respect of who made decisions the Council does make decisions

EB attended and made the following points:

- EB said he wanted to bring up the pollution in Whitehaven Harbour. He said everybody knew what it is – it's simply iron or iron oxide probably. Everybody knows where it's coming from and there was 2 simple solutions either put a filter on it or divert it directly into the ocean because there was already another outlet that goes into Lowca beck with the same stuff going in. It was simply a case of getting the money to do it. He said our previous worthless Conservative MP looked into it for 2 years and now the worthless Labour MP has looked into it for nearly a year. He said he looked into Whitehaven Harbour quite often but that doesn't get it fixed either. He said they say it's funding but the Nuclear Regulatory Committee seems to have plenty of money to do other things so that they can build a nuclear waste dump so why can't we get it fixed – it's the main thing in Whitehaven. People come to the Harbour, the locals walk round the Harbour and it's a disgrace. So when are they going to stop talking about it and fix it. He said it was 3 years now and asked if it was going to be a 5 year plan, a 10 year plan, 20 year plan. He said it was a simple fix. Get it done.

The Chairman said that the Town Council could not do it as it did not belong to the Town Council but the Clerk would write to him with any progress that had been made.

The Chairman closed the public participation

2802/25 Minutes of Annual Council Meeting held on 29th May 2025

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor White that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. A vote was held and 5 Councillors voted for and 3 Councillors abstained

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Report from Cumberland Council

Councillor M Hawkins attended and made the following points:

- Whitehaven Coastal and Community Panel met on 17th June.
First on the Agenda was an update from Fibrus especially around connectivity in Rottington
- The investment at the meeting were
£6,000 to Lowca Parish Council for an upgrade to a playpark
£2,000 to Hensingham Rugby League for youth provision
£7,700 to Wildlife Trust for the Pollination Project
£2,500 to Whitehaven Community Trust for youth equipment
£4,000 to Mirehouse Community Centre to support vulnerable people
£5,000 to Adams Recreation Ground at St Bees for a youth shelter
- This Saturday 28th June at 10.30 the Whitehaven and Community Panel were meeting at The Beacon and they were going to have a walk round Town it's called a Place Event. He said they had planned the route and they were asking people to go along and walk round with them and look at Whitehaven's assets and what assets we've got and also people's knowledge of the area and anything that might benefit from improvement. He said it would finish at approximately 2.00pm

Councillor Taylor asked who was the Chairman of the Meeting and Councillor Hawkins said it wasn't a Meeting and it was coming from the Whitehaven and Coastal Communities

- Councillor Hawkins said himself and Councillor Minshaw in conjunction with the Rivers Trust had set up a monthly walking group which would be going from Mirehouse on the first Wednesday of the month starting next month in the afternoons. It would start at the Community Centre on 2nd July at 3.00pm

Councillor O'Kane a while ago we talked about trying to get a meeting together with the Town Councillors and Cumberland Councillors and it hasn't happened yet because he had seen this before and we seem to be split all the time with the Town Council trying to working in one direction and Cumberland Council trying working in another and never the twain shall meet and that came up at our Annual Meeting this year where nobody else turned up and there was no report and his view was Cumberland Council and the Town Council need to work together.

Councillor O'Kane referred to the Cenotaph and said there was to be a Phase 2 for the Cenotaph and hopefully that Phase 2 should be on the table at the moment in terms of what was going to be done and the cost

Councillor O'Kane said a lady had been walking along parallel to the golf club a long straight road and either side of it is a grassed area. He said she had a dog with her and she was trying to avoid the grass on one side and because the dog moved she ended up stepping off the grass onto the road.

The bone of contention was the grass either side of that straight road where people drive at 60-70 is left uncut as are roundabouts on either side and asked Councillor Hawkins if there was any way he could get through to Cumberland Council and asked him if he could pass it on before someone was hurt by a car. Councillor Hawkins said he would do this. Councillor Gill said he had had a telephone call From Councillor Mark Fryer that day to say he was unable to attend this meeting as he was double booked but he assured Councillor Gill that he would be happy to come and he had asked the Clerk to write to Councillor Fryer giving him the dates of our Meetings

Councillor Hawkins referred to informal meetings between Cumberland council and the Town Council and said now that we have got a new Chair we can start reaching out

Councillor Pearson said he had had a walk around on 6th June with Emma Williamson, man from Highways, Open Spaces and Home Housing and on the St Bees road the grass now is 3 foot high. The other day when he was going down it was pouring down he saw a man with 2 springers and he had to stand into the grass. He had showed them this and Craig McCarron was really helpful and he pointed out to them at least 3 or 4 places where somebody could potentially be killed. He said all he got was a lot of talk about who owns the land. Then he had shown them a place where a youngster could fall through a wall where there was a 25 foot drop onto sandstone steps and the first thing he was asked was who does it belong to and he said that wouldn't be the question if somebody's child falls through it and ends up dead at the bottom. Councillor Pearson said they had a walkabout and he had shown them the footpath that no longer exists because it was so far overgrown. The man from Open Spaces said it was theirs but it was now 20 days on and the only person who had got back to him was Craig McCarron and he had said they would do what they could. Councillor Pearson pointed out the lamp post that hasn't worked for 3 years which coming up to dark nights the junction is black. He said Emma Williamson had said she hoped it wouldn't cost as much as the one she had done on Kells at it had cost £85,000. He said they were talking about a B road that was supposed to be 30mph and there were no signs to tell anybody it was 30mph and nearly every car was exceeding the speed limit. He said it was just waiting for another fatality. He said he had had no reply from Open Spaces or anybody else as to when they were going to do something Councillor Hawkins said he would ask Julian for an update. Councillor Pearson said he had mentioned no mans land again and they had cut the grass on Greenbank again today a strip of grass 10 yards wide. Councillor Taylor asked Councillor Hawkins to pass thanks onto Councillor Ghayouba for getting the playpark for Bransty. The Chairman thanked Councillor Hawkins for his report

2804/25 Planning Applications

The Council considered a list of Planning Applications shown at Appendix 1. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor White that following consideration of the Planning Applications on Appendix 1 that Cumberland Council be informed that the Council had no representations/comments to make. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - That following consideration of the Planning Applications on Appendix 1 that Cumberland Council be informed that the Council had no representations/comments to make

2805/25 Finance Report

The Council considered the Finance report

- i. Appendix 1 – The Council considered a list of invoices at Appendix 1 plus 3 additional invoices as follows:-

V Gorley	£8.64 for mileage
V Gorley	£4.50 for mileage
Fluid Productions	£1,631.28 for technical support for science show

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor Carr that the invoices shown at Appendix 1 plus the 3 additional invoices above be approved and paid. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That the invoices shown on Appendix 1 plus the 3 additional invoices above be approved and paid

- ii. Appendices 2 and 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor Carr that Appendices 2 and 3 be approved and noted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - That Appendices 2 and 3 be approved and noted.

2806/25 Quote for Winter Bedding Plants

The Council considered a Report containing a quote of £1,926.60 inclusive of VAT for the provision of flowers for the 2025 Winter season from the Council's preferred supplier.

In order to purchase flowers from the Council's preferred supplier the Council considered suspending Financial Regulation 5 to permit this. In order to

suspend Financial Regulation 5, Financial Regulation 19.2 states that the Council may by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant Meeting of the Council suspend any part of the Financial Regulations provided that the reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up. The Council considered these at paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of the Report. It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Carr (i) that the Council resolves to suspend Financial Regulation 5 and (ii) having made the resolution agrees to the reasons for the suspension in paragraph 1.3 of the Report be recorded and the assessment of the risks in paragraph 1.3 of the Report be accepted and approved. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – (i) That that the Council having made the resolution to suspend Financial Regulation 5 and (ii) having made the resolution agrees to the reasons for the suspension in paragraph 1.3 of the Report be recorded and the assessment of the risks in paragraph 1.3 of the Report be accepted and approved.

2807/25 Electoral Review of Cumberland Council: Draft Recommendations

The Council considered a consultation report received from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England relating to the new proposals for new electoral arrangements in Cumberland. The closing date for representations was 11th August 2025. The Chairman said that he was happy with the proposals for Whitehaven. Following a discussion Councillor Gill proposed that the Council agree to the recommendations for Whitehaven on the Boundary Commission Report and that any Members with any views should send them in themselves and this was seconded by Councillor Hayes. A vote was held and 7 Councillors voted for the proposal and 1 Councillor abstained

RESOLVED - That the Council agree to the recommendations for Whitehaven on the Boundary Commission Report and that any Members with any views should send them in themselves

2808/25 Report Allotment Update

The Council considered a report on the up to date position regarding the Council’s four allotment Sites. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that the report be noted and that a Zoom Meeting be arranged between the Site Representatives and the Allotments Advisory Group. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - That the report be noted and that a Zoom Meeting be arranged between the Site Representatives and the Allotments Advisory Group.

2809/25 Trustee on the Whitehaven Relief in Need Committee

The Council considered a report on a request from Reverend Alison Dobell for a representative to become a Trustee on the Whitehaven Relief in Need Committee. Councillor Hayes volunteered and it was proposed by Councillor Gill and seconded by Councillor Carr that Councillor Hayes be appointed to sit on the Whitehaven Relief in Need Committee. A vote was held and 7 Councillors voted for the proposal and 1 Councillor abstained

RESOLVED – That that Councillor Hayes be appointed to sit on the Whitehaven Relief in Need Committee

2810/25 Committees and Advisory Groups

The Chairman referred to Minutes that had been agreed earlier and in particular the appointments to Committees and Advisory Groups. He said some of the Councillors were not there for that Meeting. Councillor O’Kane said he wished to sit on the Policy and Resources and Finance Committee; The Office Accommodation Steering Group and the St Nicholas Gardens Advisory Group and this was agreed

2811/25 Committee member for a Viability Study into turning the South Gallery at St James Church into a Museum

The Council were informed that a request had been received from the Reverend Alison Dobell for someone to sit on a Committee to undertake a viability study into the possibility of turning the South Gallery of St James Church into a Museum to house items from the Anglican Churches buildings of Whitehaven which have ceased to be and also the Miners banners which had come to St James after the Mission Church had been sold. Councillor Gill said he was an ex Miner and would be prepared to sit on the Committee. It was proposed by Councillor Taylor and seconded by Chris Hayes that Councillor Gill be nominated to sit on the Committee. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That Councillor Gill be nominated to sit on the Committee.

2812/25 WCSSG

Councillor E Dinsdale could not attend the Meeting and had submitted his apology for absence and therefore there was no report from the WCSSG

2813/25 Councillor Ward Matters

- i. Councillor Taylor made the following points

- He thanked Councillor Ghayouba for the play park at Bransty and all he had done for it. He referred to Phase 1 Jericho Play park which was up and running and they were looking to get funding for Phase 2
 - He said Hensingham Rugby League had a girls team and he had given £500 from his Ward Grand to the girls team
 - He said how good Beck Bottom was looking and it was really starting to bloom
- ii. Councillor Carr said he had some good news and some bad news at the same time. Last month Home Group turned up at the Tenant's house for the water ingress and everything was looking positive. Unfortunately 4 weeks on and nothing had been done whatsoever so again disappointing from Home Group but it was expected.
 - iii. Councillor O'Kane said he had put a request in in the middle of last week for the Victoria Road/Bleach Green hedge to be cut. He said the hedge area had grown substantially and was now coming right out into the road and it was only a matter of time before cars got scratched and asked that this be looked into.
 - iv. Councillor Hayes said the school buses on Kells was an ongoing thing and was going to be fought vigorously by the people of Kells
 - v. Councillor Pearson referred to overgrown vegetation out of control. He said people coming down Woodhouse to Greenbank the trees are that overgrown coming down Woodhouse Hill can't walk because the trees are that far overgrown anybody tall just can't use that footpath. On the other side the grass has grown that long you can hardly see the footpath and last year it was never maintained at all it was never cut. Either side it's the same again and people were getting at him asking why it hadn't been cut. If you're any taller than 5ft you just can't walk.
 - vi. Councillor Gill said that when he was Mayor previously he had paid for 2 tubs out of his allowance to go around the cenotaph at Hensingham. He said 1 tub was broken and the other tub was planted up. He just wondered if this could be replaced
 - vii. Councillor O'Kane asked if the Council could have a monthly update from the powers that be on the Harbour and the Chairman said the Clerk would be asked to do this.

2814/25 Date and Time of next Meeting

The next Town Council Meeting would be on Thursday 31st July 2025 at the Beacon Portal, Whitehaven at 6.00pm

2815/25 IN PRIVATE

That prior to the following items of business the Chairman moved the following resolution:

That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be

transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the public and or press be instructed to withdraw. Councillor O’Kane proposed this and Councillor Hayes seconded this. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - That the public and or press be instructed to withdraw.

2816/25 Update on Office Accommodation

The Clerk gave a report received from the Contractor on progress since the report to the Council Meeting in April as follows:

Para 1.1 Page 1 – monthly update on Progress

Para 1.2 Page 2

- Deposit Account Starting Balance, Contract Price minus payment made to William King

Para 1.2 Page 3

- Deposit Account Income since 1st April 2024

Para 1.2 Page 4

- Invoices received from William King

Para 1.2 Page 5

- Projected expenditure other than from William King

Para 1.2 Page 6

- Expenditure since 1st April 2024

Para 1.2 Page 7

- As at February 2025 individual percentages of work in contract that have been complete

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that the information contained in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 be approved and noted. A vote was held and 7 Councillors voted for the proposal and 1 Councillor abstained

RESOLVED – That the information contained in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 of the report be approved and noted

2817/25 Applications for Grants – WADAOS and WCT

The Council considered applications for grants of £1,000 from WADAOS and WCT. It was proposed by Councillor Gill that each organisation be given a grant of £500.00. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That grants of £500.00 be awarded to WADAOS and WCT

The Meeting Closed at 7.00pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. G. M.', written in a cursive style.

Chairman