

WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 28th August 2025

Present: Councillor R Gill (Chairman); Councillor E Dinsdale; Councillor C Hayes; Councillor B O’Kane; Councillor A Pearson; Councillor R Redmond; Councillor G Roberts; Councillor A Spedding;

M. Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

V. Gorley, Assistant Clerk

Members of the Public

Press

Prior to the Meeting starting the Chairman 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

2836/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received as follows:-

Councillor G Dinsdale	Prior Appointment
Councillor J Carr	Work Committment
Councillor R White	Away
Councillor R Taylor	Away

It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Hayes 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

2837/25 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gill declared that he was a member of the Whitehaven Heritage Action Group

2838/25 Public Participation

BM appeared and made the following points:

- Opposite one of the entrances to Castle Park. He said this was a serious request following a visit from the Detective Constable in connection with the rape report which took place in Castle Park some days ago. He said it was evident that the Police were withholding certain information which would encourage people to come forward or trigger memories of what had happened around that time. He said the decision had been made not to release certain information to the public. He said he was wondering even though it was not totally in the purview of the Council nonetheless open spaces and allotments and the safe enjoyment of allotments and open spaces is vital for families and children and others like his 14 year old daughter who use these spaces regularly. He said he was requesting an official letter from the Town Council to the Police Commissioner or Constable to encourage them to release that information in the interests of gathering more information from the public and perhaps then in the future enhancing the relationship between the public and the police. The Chairman said he would ask the Clerk to investigate this if she finds she is legally able to do so

Councillor Spedding said as everybody knew there was a rape at 2.00am and a 44 year old man was arrested but released without charge. He said after that there was upgraded Police patrols in the Park. He said Councillor Hayes had been speaking to various Police Officers in the Park. He said all in all there was a rape investigation still ongoing, there is a rapist at large as no arrest has been made since then. He said to get some information to bring to that night's meeting he had contacted the Cumbria Police Commissioner by email asking for some information and had got a reply back from the Police to say thank you we'll look into it. He had given the Police Commissioner his mobile number but had not received a reply and his concern was the fact that there are young girls wandering round in the park and there is a rapist on the loose and had anything been done to reassure the public. He said so on behalf of the Town Council the Clerk was going to write? The Chairman said the Clerk was going to seek advice and if it was appropriate for the Council to write she would do so.

Councillor E Dinsdale said he didn't think it sat with the Police Commissioner – he thought it sat more with the Lead Police Officer. The Clerk said she

thought the reply she was likely to get back was that the Police would not release information where there was an ongoing investigation but she would still write

The Chairman thanked BM for attending

2839/25 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 31st July 2025

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor aspedding that the Minutes of the meeting held on 31st July 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. A vote was held and 5 Councillors voted for the proposal and 3 Councillors abstained

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31st July 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

2840/25 Report from Cumberland Council

Councillor Hawkins had submitted his apologies that he was unable to attend

2841/25 Planning Applications

The Council considered a list of Planning Applications shown at Appendix 1. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor Pearson 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

2842/25 Finance Report

The Council considered the Finance report

- i. Appendix 1 – The Council considered a list of invoices at Appendix 1 plus 2 extra invoices :

Cumbria Media	£881.75 software renewal and Website maintenance
Moore	£1, 706.25 External Audit

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that the invoices shown at Appendix 1 plus the 2 extra invoices above be

approved and paid. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That the invoices shown on Appendix 1 plus the 2 extra invoices above be approved and paid

- ii. Appendices 2 and 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane 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.

2843/25 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for Year Ending 31st March 2025

The Council considered a report on the above. The Council’s External Auditors, Moore had issued their Report and Certificate for 2024/25 which was attached at Appendix 1 to the Report.

The External Auditors confirmed that the information supplied by the Council was in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that the External Auditor Report and Certificate for 2024/25 be approved and noted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - That the External Auditor Report and Certificate for 2024/25 be approved and noted.

2844/25 Call for Sites for Cumberland Local Plan

Further to Minute 2825/25 the Council considered comments submitted by Councillor White who had identified potential sites namely Strand Street, two areas at Preston Street, High Street and land opposite Wetherspoons. The Clerk confirmed that these would be passed on to Cumberland Council and if any other Councillors had anything that they wished to say or anything that they wished to forward to her that these would be forwarded to Cumberland council. Councillor O’Kane asked that site of the former Brackenthwaite care home be added. The Clerk reminded the Council that the Consultation period ran until Sunday 4th January 2026.

It was proposed by Councillor O’Kane and seconded by Councillor Hayes that the comments of Councillor White and Councillor O’Kane identifying potential sites be forwarded to Cumberland Council. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That the comments of Councillor White and Councillor O’Kane identifying potential sites be forwarded to Cumberland Council.

2845/25 Recommendations from the Allotment Advisory Group Meeting

The Council considered a report on recommendations from the Allotment Advisory Group which had held a meeting via Zoom on 7th August 2025.

Only 1 site representative attended, 1 said they were not attending but submitted an email to be read out, 1 was away and 1 did not respond. Following a discussion on the issues the Recommendations made to Council by the Allotment Advisory Group were as follows:-

1. **RECOMMENDED** – (i) That unless WM forms a Committee for Crow Park and shows that he is duly elected by a minute of that Committee that the Council will not recognise him as a representative for the Crow Park Allotment
(ii) That anyone who contacts WM with a complaint he should direct them to write to or contact the Council Offices Direct with their name and address and details of their complaint
2. **RECOMMENDED** – That WM’s request that all Councillors should visit the Allotment Site to see the mess that Whitehaven Town Council has got the site into be not agreed to
3. **RECOMMENDED** - That WM’s request that there be a change to the format of Council Meetings so that he could raise the concerns of Crow Park tenants be not agreed to as the proper place to discuss allotment issues was via the Council Offices or the Allotment Advisory Group.
4. **RECOMMENDED** - That mares tail be the responsibility of the Tenants of the individual Allotment plots
5. It was also agreed that the Clerk would reply to the other questions in WM’s email.

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor Spedding that the above recommendations made by the Allotments Advisory Group be approved by the Council. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That the above recommendations made by the Allotments Advisory Group be approved by the Council.

2846/25 Allotment Update Report

- 1.1 Further to Minute 2826/25 The Council considered an Allotment Update Report giving details of the position with regards to the Council's Allotment sites. The Clerk informed the Council that :-
 - Cartgate Allotment Site – No vacancies
 - Crow Park Allotment Site – 3 vacant plots and tenants are actively being sought
 - Midgey Allotment Site – No vacancies except for the plot specifically adopted for people with disabilities
 - Sneckyeat Allotment Site – No vacancies
- 1.2 There were no outstanding repairs from the Site Representatives.
- 1.3 With regards to WM's complaint about the entranceway to the allotments being a mess and the trackway down from the gate to the second carpark having potholes the Clerk had asked the Contractor to have a look at this and he was currently dealing with it and will be submitting a quote for carrying out some work which will then be forwarded to the Council for authorisation. It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O'Kane that the report be noted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

2847/25 Markets Policy 2025

The Council considered a report on Cumberland Council's Market Policy 2025 of which the Council had only recently been made aware and which would potentially affect not only the Town Council but other local community organisations in the area eg village/parish halls, community centres, civic halls. The Policy raised several questions which were contained in Appendix 4 to the Report. Following a discussion on this it was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O'Kane that (i) the list of questions at Appendix 4 be sent to the appropriate officer at Cumberland Council and he be asked to send the Council the answers to these questions in writing and (ii) that the Officer be invited to the next meeting of the Town Council to discuss the Policy and answer any further queries. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That (i) the list of questions at Appendix 4 be sent to the appropriate officer at Cumberland Council and he be asked to send the Council the answers to these questions in writing and (ii) that the Officer be invited to the next meeting of the Town Council to discuss the Policy and answer any further queries.

Councillor E Dinsdale made the following points:-

- He attended a Stakeholders Meeting on Tuesday 5th August 2025 at Cleator Moor Civic Hall
- Some of the key points that came out of this – at this moment in time the NDA Group Draft Strategy is taking priority and this comes around every few years to produce a public consultation around all aspects of the NDA Estate but due to the great extent of it and the money getting used at Sellafield it's massive for our area and the community
- There was a webinar which he would be attending in September which is all related to this 5 year plan and also a special stakeholders meeting has been called at the end of September 2025 to vote to finalise the consultation which was unusual as normally their second one is quarterly but they have set one permanently aside just to deal with the NDA 5 year strategy.
- Councillor Dinsdale mentioned at the meeting around the closure of Bransty Tunnel and the impact that that was having currently on the nuclear industry. Sellafield Ltd had confirmed afterwards around the impact that this was having on employees obviously having to be bussed in
- Low level waste did also say that they had had to re-route tons of waste that was going to Drigg that had to go down to the main line and then cut in at the bottom end of Cumbria. But initially the closure did have a big impact
- Councillor Dinsdale said there was something else that he had previously reported to Council around the Parliamentary Accounts Committee hearing that took place a number of months ago and the Treasury produced a report as part of their meeting about that where they had introduced recommendations and responses to some of the things that were raised at this meeting to the Department for Energy and Security which the nuclear industry comes under. He said he could make this available to any Councillors who wanted it but it was a bit of a mixed bag – there were some good points and some very challenging points around things like costs and other things relating to the Sellafield site.
- A good news story – Councillor had come across PM who was a Sellafield Ltd employee who worked at Albion. She had showed him a document that she had done. She had created a document on powerpoint and had created a guide to Sellafield and she had put a rough illustration of every building on site. This took up to 18 months and he passed the document to the Chairman. He said he thought it was a fantastic piece of work for someone to take the time out to do something like that. He said he had raised it at the Stakeholders Meeting and Sellafield Ltd had agreed in

principle where they were going to organise some sort of event in recognition and he said he would like the Mayor to come along and present something to P for the work she has done as a Whitehaven employee. He said obviously dates would have to be sorted out and this would be at Albion and said that he knew Councillor Hayes had given out plaques in the past and Councillor Hayes confirmed that he had some plaques left. The Chairman asked if he could keep the document on file and Councillor Dinsdale said he would get one for him but at this time they were marked official

The Chairman thanked Councillor E Dinsdale for his report

2849/25 Robotic Exhibition

The Clerk reported on 2 extra costings for the Robotic Exhibition namely:-

1. Removal costs going to Falkirk to pick the robots up and loading them and taking them to our Council Office and then picking up the robots at the end of the exhibition, loading them and returning them to Falkirk. Quotes were sought but only one was received from a local firm in the sum of £813.00
2. Costs for the setting out and dismantling of the Robotic Exhibition. Works 4 you had a group of people who carry out this type of work and they could provide 2 people for 2 days at a cost of £500.00

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that this expenditure be approved. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That this expenditure be approved

2850/25 Quote for Vertical Blinds for Council Office

The Clerk reported that quotes had been sought for the provision of vertical blinds for the ground floor of the Council Offices. 4 quotes had been received as follows:-

A	£1,033.33 plus VAT
B	£1,066.67 plus VAT
C	£1,899.00 plus VAT
D	£1,135.70 plus VAT

It was proposed by Councillor Hayes and seconded by Councillor O’Kane that Quote B in the sum of £1,066.67 plus Vat be accepted. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - That Quote B in the sum of £1,066.67 plus Vat be accepted

- (i) Councillor Redmond referred to the criteria for getting a house. He said he knew someone who had applied for a house in Whitehaven and apparently someone from outside the area had got a house before them. The Chairman said the Council had no power over housing. Councillor E Dinsdale said the problem just raised was probably generic to all Councillors. He asked would it not be a good idea for the Council to ask all of the Housing Associations within Whitehaven to get off them directly what was their process around allocations around giving somebody from outside the area a bungalow when somebody who has been on the list for years and has been overlooked. The Clerk said all the information was available to anyone who wants a house whether it is outside or inside the area. It was a system called Choice Lettings and this guides a person through the process and takes into account their circumstances. Councillor Pearson said he was aware of a person who on the recommendation of Cllr Mike Hawkins had attended sessions in the Senhouse Centre and who had eventually got a house. Councillor Dinsdale suggested that Councillor Redmond take this back and advise the person to go to the Senhouse centre.
- (ii) Councillor O’Kane referred to the traffic situation namely:
- The constantly overgrown hedge on Victoria Road that was growing right out into Victoria Road area. Last year it was cut once at the end of the season. He said it was now a massive hedge and asked if the Clerk could write to Cumberland Council about it
 - The road by the Golf Course. He said people were stepping off the grass into the roadway and cars were swerving to avoid them. He said if Cumberland Council cut the grass all the way down people would be able to walk safely down. He said this was an area well walked by lots and lots of people and he would like it reported as a matter of public safety so that if anything happened the Council could then turn round to CC and say we told you. Again he asked if the Clerk could write to Cumberland Council about this because this was a matter of safety.
- (iii) Councillor Hayes said that there was a problem with the play park at Kells. He said it was very dangerous and was falling apart so they had written to Councillor Emma Williamson but had not received a reply. He said there were about 20 emails from residents about this
- (iv) Councillor Gill referred to the bus shelter at the bottom of Egremont Road and Lincoln Road. He said it was a disgrace all the windows were out and it was really dangerous and the Council should ask Cumberland Council to replace it
- (v) Councillor Spedding referred to the sad death of Bob Bennett and Councillor O’Kane asked that after finishing the Councillor Ward Matters

the Council could spend two minutes to reflect on the help and guidance that Bennett Brothers had given the Council

- (vi) Councillor Pearson said that this was an update. As everyone knew he had said about the vegetation at the last Meeting and the possibility of people getting killed in at least 6 places and somebody getting killed really concerned him. But the other people who can avoid people being killed don't seem to be interested. So after 2 months of no action from the walkout with the representatives from Cumberland Council he thought that now was the time to email Josh MacAlister, Councillor Emma Williamson and then to try to get some action he had an article in the Whitehaven News. The Whitehaven News were involved and the day after they came and cut the verges. This happened last year – he had to go to the Whitehaven News to ask to get something done. He said they were not bothered about the fact that somebody might get killed they were more bothered about the bad press. He said to him it was crazy they came with a tractor and it took them 4 hours to do. He said it was not a fantastic job but it had improved it and it was a start. And he thought that had only happened because of the involvement of the Whitehaven News. Josh MacAlister had not replied and Councillor Williamson had not replied. He said there were still places where there were dangers to people. Where there was no sighting there was now 20 yards so at least they would see a car coming before it actually hit them. Before it was going to hit them and they would never see it but now they have got a second to know they're going to die. He said again we get back to birds nests. He said he didn't think a persons life should come before birds nests. He said birds had gone at this time of year but he thought it was crazy to point out places where a member of the public could actually be killed and people who represent the people at a higher level aren't interested. He said if it did happen he had all the emails that had been sent and this was the second year on where the same thing had happened and if it wasn't for the Whitehaven News nothing would happen. So we are waiting for them to come and put the footpath back that should be there to keep people off the road, clear the entrances properly, cut the grass the full length. He said they hadn't got the issue sorted.
- (vii) Councillor E Dinsdale said it was sad news that Shoezone at Bridges Retail Park was closing and this would be another empty unit and he was sure that the Council would like to see the retail park in our Town going in a different direction and shops opening up. He hoped the unit would not stay empty for long.

The Chairman asked Members to stand for a minute's silence to remember Bob Bennett

Councillor O'Kane said Bennet Brothers had done unbelievable work for the Town Council and had had a conversation with the Clerk as to ways of

commemorating Bob Bennet and a memorial bench had been talked about to be placed in St Nicholas Gardens with the consent of the Church. The Chairman asked that an item be put on the Agenda for the next Meeting about this.

2852/25 Date and Time of next Meeting

The next Town Council Meeting would be on Thursday 25th September 2025 at the Beacon Portal, Whitehaven at 6.00pm

Councillor E Dinsdale left the Meeting and did not return

2853/25 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 Hayes proposed this and Councillor O’Kane seconded this. A vote was held and it was unanimously

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

2854/25 Update on Office Accommodation

Further to Minute 2816/25 the Clerk gave a report on progress since that time with the up to date position regarding the renovation work to the Council Offices together with details of budget expenditure and projection of total expenditure

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

Para 1.3 It had been hoped to clean the carpet tiles on the stairs but when this was attempted they just crumbled. So new carpet tiles for the stairs are required. The nosings could be re-used. The contractor had given a quote of £1,724.70 plus VAT which our Architect confirmed was a legitimate costing and the Council was asked to approve this work and expenditure
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 and the extra works recommended in paragraph 1.3 be approved. A vote was held and it was unanimously

RESOLVED – That the information contained in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 of the report be approved and noted and the extra works recommended by the Architect in paragraph 1.3 be approved

The Meeting Closed at 7.10pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. G. M.', is written above the title 'Chairman'.

Chairman