

# MARYPORT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Town Assembly held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013 in the Council Chambers, Town Hall, Maryport at 7.00pm.

## Present

Councillor B Carter	Councillor Ms D Charlton
Councillor Ms G Elliot	Councillor Mrs A Kendall
Councillor P Kendall	Councillor D King
Councillor Mrs McCarron-Holmes	Councillor G Mitchell
Councillor W Pegram	Councillor Mrs L Radcliffe
Councillor Ms C Tindall	

## In Attendance

Mr P Bramley (Clerk)  
Mrs V Patterson (Press)  
Member of the Public

## Apologies for Absence

Councillor A Long  
Councillor G Mitchell  
Councillor Mrs L Radcliffe  
Councillor Mrs J Wood  
Councillor M Wood

## 1. Minutes of Annual Town Assembly held on 19 April 2012

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 19 April 2012 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## 2. Annual Report of the Town Council

The Mayor, Councillor P Kendall, reported that it had been an amazing year for Maryport, the highlight being the Olympic Torch Relay around Britain & a great deal of thanks must go to the organisation put in place by the Clerks for the Maryport leg of the tour, & also to Council Members who attended & members of the community who gave their time. The Council had provided packed lunches for the school children who had lined the streets & provided fantastic support.

Improvements to the town were making progress even though the economic situation was so poor. A welcome modernisation of the Well Lane Flats had taken place & the old Civic

Hall site had been successfully re-developed in keeping with local housing, most of the properties of which had been sold and were occupied.

The Floral Baskets introduced into the Town Centre in 2012 made a big improvement & the Council was working with other groups to introduce two large displays in the flower beds on Netherhall Corner.

The Christmas Lights Festival was a huge success for a small town with a small budget, & it was hoped that the enthusiastic support of local businesses would continue.

The Blues Festival was an on-going success & hopefully the Harbour Festival would develop into a similarly successful event.

Over the last two years, the Council had lobbied the County Council to try to sort out traffic problems on Senhouse Street, & the Council would continue to press this issue until the problems were rectified.

The Town Council continued to support the Remembrance Day events & it was important that the focus was given over to remembering those who had contributed to sacrifices made by families in past years, & that political persuasions were put aside at such times. Ward surgeries continued to take place & the contribution of all councillors towards working for the community was welcome at such events. The public had showed a positive reaction to these surgeries.

Children's School Council visits offered an assuring future for the town and the young councillors always came up with valid issues and ideas. The Council should continue to foster such development working in partnership with schools.

Following a great deal of lobbying it was pleasing to note that the proposal to close the Maryport Area Royal Mail Sorting Office had been reversed. Council members had also lobbied for the Maryport Job Centre service to be retained unchanged, but without similar success; directing people to Workington or Carlisle was not a satisfactory alternative. Similarly the proposed closure of Maryport Police Station would provide a reduced service for the public. All such closures had a direct impact on the economic structure of the town. Flimby Railway Station platform arrangements continued to be an issue & the Council was lobbying the rail authorities to have the matter addressed.

### **3. Annual Report on the Council's Finances**

Councillor Ms C Tindall, Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee, reported that 2012/13 had been a rewarding year; along with the clerks she had worked hard to ensure that the Olympic Torch Relay, Diamond Jubilee, & Christmas Lights Festival were all a success. The involvement of schools & community groups was considered to have helped bring this about, & the Chairman gave a personal thank you to everyone who had helped out in any way, and invited them to help out in upcoming events & celebrations during 2013/14. Thanks were given to Vivian Patterson from Cumbrian Newspapers for the promotion of the Council's events.

For the second year running, the Council had effectively managed all the routine and non-routine tasks of maintenance and upkeep on services where contractors had been appointed following a tendering process, ensuring that the Council not only received a good quality service for a competitive price, but also that local contractors were employed where possible.

At the previous year's meeting, a representative of the Borough Council castigated Maryport Town Council for the state of the Flowers beds at Netherhall Corner, despite these beds being their responsibility. In response, the Town Council were in the process of signing a contract with Allerdale to take over the upkeep of those beds, alongside a local

community organisation. This, in addition to the re-introduction of Hanging Baskets & Christmas Trees, continuing improvement to footpaths, running a best kept garden competition, working with schools to do litter picks and 'green' projects, & working with traders to support shop window displays, will enhance Maryport and improve its ability to attract more tourists & visitors during 2013.

The Council had given a large number of grants to support local groups & events, all of which were situated in the Maryport area, including Maryport Inshore Rescue, Maryport Blues Festival Group, Maryport Rugby clubs and the Fake Festival.

During 2013, with the Tour of Britain Cycle Race passing through Maryport, the Christmas Lights Festival, the new town team and working with schools to deliver a project every term, along with the routine work of the Council, it was likely to be a busy time.

Over the past year the Council had been hosting ward surgeries, allowing the public to share their concerns, worries & questions. These had proved successful and would continue, providing people with a direct link to the Council.

In order to provide the budget to support this work, the Council had increased the precept by 1.4% in 2013/14, the weekly equivalent of 3p a week per household for over 75% of Maryport residents and well below other precept increases in Cumbria.

All Internal & External audits had been successfully passed, receiving exceptionally positive comments on the Council's financial & governance arrangements, a remarkable turnaround from the position four years earlier, when the Council had been branded a 'failing' council.

Councillor Tindall pledged that Town Council members would continue to serve & work hard for the benefit of the people of Maryport, & that, despite what was reported in the press, the time & effort of every Town Council member was given freely.

#### **4. Observations of Borough Councillors for the divisions in which the town is situated.**

##### **Report from Councillor G Kemp, Allerdale Borough Councillor for Netherhall Ward**

Once again we see the huge impact of government cutbacks with the decline of services and drop in standards of contractors and service providers due to efficiency savings.

On a brighter note great improvements and modernisation have been carried out to housing on the Well Lane.

The new development on the site of the palace on Lower Church Street should be highly commended with the design and layout matching in beautifully with existing housing. These houses are well built and reasonably priced but are still struggling to sell in the current economic climate.

The clip and climb project at the Wave Centre is due to open in May, this was partly funded by Allerdale and I hope it is a huge success in the future but I do think the projections of visitor numbers and business is very optimistic.

It's wonderful to see the organisations and people of Maryport striving to improve the quality of life in our town and give special mention to the following;

- 1) Maryport inshore rescue building a state of the art rescue facility on the old lifeboat station site.
- 2) Maryport Festivals for running the Blues Festival.
- 3) Maryport Town Council for running the Christmas Festival.
- 4) Maryport Rugby League and Glasson Rugby League for running their own music festivals.
- 5) The Solway Trust for resurrecting the carnival, and the harbour festival.

All these groups in my opinion should be helped by both Allerdale and Town Council financially for their sterling work keeping Maryport vibrant.

**Report from Councillors Mrs J Wood & M Wood, Allerdale Borough Councillors for Ewanrigg Ward**

We can report that Ellenborough ward continues to improve. We have seen some major drainage and flood alleviation works in the past couple of years, much to the relief of local residents.

Grit bins have been placed strategically around Ellenborough and Netherpton, which is a boon to people around and about the ward during the particularly extended cold winter we have just experienced.

At the end of May 2012, we saw the opening of the long awaited play equipment on Ellenborough Moor, which has been welcomed especially by both children and their parents.

The building of new housing on Short Acres and Victory Crescent continues to be seen as a great improvement to the area and we are all very grateful to the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott for the funding of the building works.

All in all we are pleased that Ellenborough has not been forgotten by Allerdale, especially during times of austerity and squeezed budgets.

**Report from Councillor P Kendall, Allerdale Borough Councillor for Flimby Ward**

Litter and vandalism on the railway station continues to be on-going, maintenance of street lighting is an issue. Concerns over potholes are also a major issue along with street cleaning. More planned highway maintenance is required.

The youth club continues to flourish, thanks to the dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly. The annual Safety meeting we continue to have with Goldsmith proves transparent and proves good safe working practices. Pressure on Network Rail needs to be applied due to health & safety issues with the platform heights; a recent fall by a Flimby resident highlighted this. The Town Council needs to look urgently at improving access to the Flimby allotment site. Continued improvements were needed to social landlord properties.

**Report from Councillor Mrs A Kendall, Allerdale Borough Councillor for Netherhall Ward**

This ward is difficult to report on as most has been reported on by the Mayor in the earlier report. Maryport Harbour Authority is very close to taking over the responsibilities of Maryport Developments Ltd, which has been achieved through a lot of hard work by the officers of Cumbria County Council & Allerdale Borough Council, Mr Noel Butters, Mrs Pauline Gorley, Mr Stewart Swift & Mr Richard Key, as well as committee members. The funding of the new life boat building was a joint effort involving Maryport Developments Limited and the Inshore Rescue, & is now in the name of the Maryport Harbour Authority. The committee & employees strive to keep the harbour Maryport's jewel in the crown.

**Report from Councillor Mrs C McCarron-Holmes, Allerdale Borough Councillor for Ewanrigg Ward**

Reporting also on behalf of Councillor A Moore, my passion is for housing, health & nuclear issues. The Derwent & Solway upgrade of the stock on Crosby Street, costing some £540,000, including the Well Lane development, was a major project area I was involved with. A strategic needs assessment for a full board takeover is taking place. I am proud to be a representative for the forces. In terms of health, housing and employment, the Welfare Act is biting into the cash resources of the vulnerable areas.

On Nuclear issues, storage facilities for nuclear waste have not been resolved. Diligent ruling on behalf of the administration of Allerdale Borough Council has brought the Clip & Climb facility to Maryport and a new playground is expected in Ellenborough during the summer. I would like to pay tributes to fellow councillors who work and care for Maryport.

## **5. Observations of Cumbria County Councillors for the divisions in which the town is situated.**

### **Report from Councillor W Cameron, Cumbria County Councillor for Maryport West**

This will be the last report given as a county councillor; I will be standing down on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. At that time, I will have served as an elected member for almost 46 years on Parish, District & County Councils, representing the people of Maryport and surrounding villages. There has, of course, been a great deal of change in local government over this time, some for the better and some not.

Over the years I have always strived to represent the people who elected me to the very best of my ability.

It is simply age and health which has caught up on me, rather than a lessening in the desire to help improve the lives of people and the area of Maryport. I have continued over the past twelve months to attend all relevant meetings of the County Council and ensure there has been a strong voice in Maryport.

I have, over many years, reported to the Annual Town Assembly, much of the work I have been doing for the town of Maryport. I suspect that if had to try to recall all I have been able to achieve, for which I am extremely proud, I would struggle.

I would like to sincerely thank the people of Maryport and surrounding villages who have placed trust in me at the ballot box over my period in office; it has been my privilege to serve them.

### **Report from Councillor K Little, Cumbria County Councillor for Maryport East**

The past twelve months have been difficult for the County Council, with the continuation of the austerity measures coming down from central government. We have already met £80 million worth of efficiency savings, with a further £50 million to find over the next two years. This has inevitably resulted in many redundancies to staff and will result in further redundancies in the coming months. It of course also affects our ability to continue to deliver the much needed front line services to the people of Cumbria.

On a more local theme, I have continued to deal with a large number of issue for and on behalf of my constituents in the Division of Maryport East. Much of this has been around housing matters and the choice base letting system is still a cause of concern for many, as is the repair and maintenance issues many tenant have had to deal with. I have had regular contact with the appropriate housing providers and have attended a number of estate inspections with the housing provides dealing with issues which I can influence.

Highways is still a major issue for the County Council due to funding cuts, and this shows itself on the west coast as much as anywhere else. Work has been carried out in the Ewanrigg area to alleviate some of the restrictions on Ewanrigg Road and we will monitor the situation closely over the next few months.

Finally, due to the boundary changes imposed recently, the Divisions of Maryport East and West will disappear, to be replaced by Maryport North and South. Can I take this opportunity to place on record my thanks to the constituents of Maryport East for the continued support of myself over the past ten years; it has been a privilege to serve as their elected member on Cumbria County Council.

## **6. Statements & Reports from representatives of Voluntary Organisations in the Town**

### **Report from Councillor Ms C Tindall on the Fawcett Johnson Charity**

This year we divided the available monies between 21 recipients, each getting a little over £70 just prior to Christmas. The fund continues to benefit retired seamen and their widows in the Maryport Area.

### **Report from Councillor Ms C Tindall on Maryport Development Ltd**

During 2012/13, the majority of the work undertaken has been with the aim of ensuring that the harbour & the marina have a future, & it is anticipated that a smooth transfer of responsibilities to the Harbour Authority will take place during the next twelve months.

### **Report from Councillors Mrs J Wood & M Wood on the John Collins Charity**

A number of deserving people in the ward received a small grant in 2012. We will continue to sit on the trust to represent deserving cases in the ward.

## **7. Resolutions for which Notice has been given**

None received.

## **8. Other Business**

A question was received from a member of the public, Mr R Taylor of Maryport, who referred to the reference made to improvements that had taken place since the Council was in receipt of reports commenting on the poor management of its finances four years earlier, in the 2012/13 report on the Council's Finances. Mr Taylor stated that he was a member of the Council at that time, that he considered the level of reserves at that time to be more than adequate, & asked who the Mayor was four years ago.

Whilst noting that the Mayor four years earlier was Councillor Mrs M C Telford, it was explained that the occupant of that position was irrelevant to the matter referred to, as was the actual level of reserves held. The issue referred to in the report was that the Council had received reports over a number of years from both internal & external auditors stating that the Council's financial management & governance arrangements were poor & inadequate. It had held relatively high levels of reserves, which had been built up over a period of time, with no planned arrangements for their accumulation or application; it had failed for a number of years to adequately review its holding of assets; it had failed to carry out a suitable risk management assessment of its operations for many years; & it had not reviewed the effectiveness of its internal audit arrangements. All these reflected the weak financial control arrangements & practices which had been operated by the Council over a

number of years, which were considered totally inappropriate as a means of accounting for the management of public expenditure. Following advice taken from its internal auditor, the Council had accepted that its staff resource levels were insufficiently adequate to enable a Council of its size to function effectively, & had taken action to address this, following which, facilitated through effective management, it had made such effective improvements to its internal controls that its financial management & governance arrangements had been reported as being exemplary by its internal auditor.

Councillor Ms D Charlton raised an issue regarding used needles on the Ewanrigg estate, Councillor P Kendall replied that the matter should be reported to the Police and Allerdale Borough Council Street Cleansing service.

Councillor Charlton also asked why no water was supplied at the Cemetery on Allonby Road, where many former Maryport residents were buried. Councillor P Kendall advised that Allerdale Borough Council was the responsible authority & that the water supply had been disconnected, following problems, and a water butt put in place as a replacement, from where visitors to the site could obtain water. Councillor Mrs A Kendall noted that the cemetery was in the parish of Crosscanonby.

#### **9. Members' 2012/13 Meeting Attendance Record**

Maryport Town Council members' attendance figures were noted. Councillor A Kendall thanked the Clerks for providing this statistical record and for assisting councillors throughout the year.

Mayor P Kendall presented figures for attendance at Allerdale Borough Council meetings of members representing Maryport Wards, as follows:

Councillor G Kemp	6 meetings
Councillor Mrs A Kendall	18 meetings
Councillor P Kendall	38 meetings
Councillor Mrs C McCarron-Holmes	13 meetings
Councillor A Moore	17 meetings
Councillor Mrs J Wood	15 meetings
Councillor M Wood	30 meetings

The meeting finished at 7.45pm.

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....