

Workington Town Council

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Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of parish electors held on Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 6.30pm in Allerdale House, Griffin Street, Workington, CA14 3YJ.

Present: 3 members of the public.

Cllrs Barbara Cannon, David Farrar, Sue Fryer, Mark Fryer, Hilary Harrington, Allan Hodgson, Bernadette Jones, Paul Larkin, John Mills, Billy Miskelly, Patricia Poole, Denise Rollo, Mike Rollo, Neil Schofield, Ellie Wood and Joan Wright and the Chief Officer.

- 1. Welcome:** The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting:** The minutes from the Town Assembly meeting on 24th April 2024 were confirmed as a true record.
- 3. A report from Cllr Mark Fryer, Cumberland Council:**

Cllr Fryer advised that he had attended a number of town meetings over the last few months. Cumberland Council are improving their accessibility and their connection with the community and this includes speaking at events and being available.

Cumberland Council have experienced several issues when combining with other local authorities and this included not being able to access policies and procedures. There has also been approx. 30 staff members who have left the finance departments across five different accounting systems and this has had an impact.

The focus of the Council from the offset has been two main target areas; adult social care and children. 532 children were in care across the Cumberland area and this has now been reduced to 452.

Costs are extremely high for keeping children in care. The Council has done a great job in balancing the budget and has gone from 'requires improvement' to 'good'.

Cllr Fryer expressed gratitude to all staff who ensure that all appointments are covered, regardless of the weather and ensure a high level of public service.

Highways are currently fixing reported pot holes in two days and have significantly reduced the number being reported, especially in the Carlise area.

There are currently 100 apprentices in Cumberland Council in the highways area and the Council is striving to give apprentice opportunities to those children in care.

The Council is also starting to focus on enforcement for dog fouling, fly tipping etc.

The Council strives to serve the community and Cllr Fryer is proud to be leading the first unitary authority in the county. There have been tough decisions to make, but these have been done with the best intent and with a focus on community interest.

Q: I have noticed a difference in the contractors carrying out work for Cumberland Council and there has been a negative impact on the timescales for which work is completed.

Key contacts at Cumberland are no longer available, making it difficult to escalate concerns – *this was in relation to the Helena Thompson Museum.*

A: Cllr Fryer advised that yes, key personnel at the Council had left, issues could be reported directly to Cllr Fryer to look into and this should have been reported sooner so it could have been actioned.

Statement: Pot holes are not being fixed within two days and faded resident parking signs have been reported for some time and nothing has happened.

A: Keep reporting them on the system so they can be tracked and highlighted if they have not been actioned.

S: I have had a very positive response to any pot holes I have reported so well done to Cumberland.

S: My dealings with Cumberland Council's care service have been extremely positive and I am thankful for Cumberland Council's Facebook page as it is very informative.

Q: Most of the staff who are carers for children and handicapped people seem to be coloured people. Can I ask why this is and why these jobs aren't being given to indigenous people.

A: Following Brexit 4 million people returned to eastern European countries and people who are coming here now do so under the new commonwealth system. The current economic environment that we are in sees many foreign people working in towns and thank goodness they do. There are many jobs available for everyone to apply for. People in these roles do not get the pay or the recognition they deserve and this needs to be addressed from central government.

S: Many people are migrating to this county and are having to live in poor conditions. Thank god these workers have come forward to maintain care in the community. We should show respect and appreciation for their vital contributions.

Cllr Sue and Mark Fryer left the meeting.

4. Annual Report: The Mayor presented the Council's annual report for the year.

5. Questions and comments from electors:

Q: I would like to know what the Council is doing to repair the Uppies and Downies statues which have been dumped at clay flats storage facility.

A: These statues belong to Cumberland Council.

Q: You have gone through a list of the events this year, but not mentioned Armed Forces Day. Please can the Council ensure this is promoted.

A: This is an event organised by the Royal British Legion and not Workington Town Council, but the Council is happy to promote the event, as they do each year.

S: The Council has done well to bring in income and committees have kept a close eye on the finances, so well done for coming under budget, but could I ask that the Council does not increase the precept next year as many people within the town are dealing with the cost-of-living crisis and are strapped for cash.

Meeting ended at 7.19pm.