



# Penrith Town Council

Unit 1, Church House, 19-24 Friargate, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7XR

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Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Penrith Town Council on Monday 31 March 2025.

## **PRESENT**

Cllr. Bowen	Pategill Ward	Cllr. B. Jayson	West Ward
Cllr. Burgin	South Ward	Cllr. Kenyon	North Ward
Cllr. Davies	West Ward	Cllr. Lawson	Carleton Ward
Cllr. Donald	North Ward	Cllr. Shepherd	East Ward
Cllr. Holden	Carleton Ward	Cllr. Smith	South Ward
Cllr. Jackson	North Ward		

Services and Contracts Manager

Community Services Officer

**MINUTES FOR THE  
EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL  
31 March 2025**

**PART I**

**PTC24/114 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jayson, Rudhall and Snell.

**PTC24/115 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Members were asked to receive any declarations by Members of interests in respect of items on the agenda and apply for a dispensation to remain, speak, and/or vote during consideration of that item.

There were no declarations of interest and requests for dispensations.

**PTC24/116 Public Participation**

**a) Public Representations**

There were no representations from members of the public.

**PTC24/117 Excluded Item: Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960**

Members noted that there were no items that should be considered without the press and public, pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1960.

**PTC24/118 Community Governance Review Elections**

Members considered the Westmorland and Furness Council Governance Review for Elections consultation.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- i. The Council supports the draft recommendations as set out in the Westmorland and Furness Council Governance Review paper and a response confirming this be submitted.
- ii. Members noted that the next Penrith Town Council elections were scheduled for May 2027 and should the recommendations of this review be approved there would be no change to the Town Council elections schedule.

## **PTC24/119 Electoral Review of Westmorland and Furness Council: Draft Recommendations Consultation**

Members considered the draft response to the consultation.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

The response be approved and submitted:

Please be advised that at present the Town Council is comprised of 15 Councillors.

The number of Councillors should remain as 15 as the number of Councillors for this parish have previously undergone a CGR in 2019 reducing the number of Councillors from 19 to 15. The recommendation to lower the number of Councillors from 15 to 14 is therefore not accepted.

The recommendation reduces the potential talent pool of the Council. We are fortunate to have a wide range of in-depth expertise that would be wrong to diminish. Penrith is growing, so having fewer councillors is counterintuitive. As unpaid volunteers, increasing the workload will put off sitting councillors from standing in future elections and dissuade potential candidates from putting themselves forward. This will be especially true of those of working age, whom we have always struggled to keep on board. This, in turn, also reduces the potential variety and experience of councillors.

As Westmorland and Furness Council evolves the Town Council may be looked upon to accept discretionary assets and services. These proposals would make this difficult to manage.

Penrith Town Council has held contested elections, byelections and arranged successful co-options to Council and has not carried long term vacancies to seats.

The proposal reduces number of Members to an even number of 14. It is normal practice for odd numbers of Councillors to be allocated to parishes to assist in the definition of a majority during voting.

### **Fair Representation**

Section 166 of the 2010 Guidance on community governance reviews states that:

*"It is an important democratic principle that each person's vote should be of equal weight so far as possible, having regard to other legitimate competing factors, when it comes to the election of councillors. There is no provision in legislation that each parish councillor should represent, as nearly as may be, the same number of electors. However, the LGBCE believes it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government, either for voters or councillors, to have significant differences in levels of representation between different parish wards. Such variations could make it difficult, in workload terms, for councillors to adequately represent the interests of residents."*

*There is also a risk that where one or more wards of a parish are over-represented by councillors, the residents of those wards (and their councillors) could be perceived as having more influence than others on the council."*

The proposal for ward representations results in significant variation in representation across the parish. The largest ward having 5 councillors and the smallest only 1.

### **Change of Boundaries & Removal of Penrith East Ward**

Penrith East is a defined area of Penrith with its own demographic. For hyper-locality it is essential to keep the wards as they are.

The change diminishes the link between residents and councillors. Residents rightly consider their respective patches of Penrith to be distinct and want councillors dedicated to their more localised communities, with the relevant knowledge of those areas.

Campaigning costs and workload becomes more onerous. Some councillors have access to party resources to fund leaflets and provide help to talk to several thousand residents but for independent candidates this adds more difficulty.

There will be negligible cost savings, as town councillors are not paid. There would be fewer polling stations but that then makes voting more difficult for residents.

Parts of Penrith East involve the Town Centre and to include this area within the extended Carleton Ward would be a disadvantage, creating too large a geographical ward, making it unmanageable for both Councillors and residents.

### **Concluding Point**

Penrith Town Council believes that there has been a lot of change over recent years with the introduction of the new unitary authority. The current work and further change may lead to confusion and disengagement within the electorate.

### **PTC24/120 Next Meeting**

Members noted the next meeting was the Annual Town Council Meeting scheduled for Monday 19 May 2025 at 6.00pm, Unit 2, Church House, Friargate, Penrith.

**CHAIR:**

**DATE:**

### **PART II – PRIVATE SECTION**

There were no further items in this part of the agenda.

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL  
MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Access to Information**

Copies of the agenda are available for members of the public to inspect prior to the meeting. Agenda and Part I reports are available on the Town Council website: <https://www.penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk/>

**Background Papers**

Requests for the background papers to the Part I reports, excluding those papers that contain exempt information, can be made between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm, Monday to Wednesday via [office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk)