



**Berwick-upon-Tweed
Town Council**

Minutes of the Town Council Budget and Administration Committee
Meeting held on Monday, 18 March 2024 at 6.00pm in The Meeting
Room, Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Office, Unit 1, 82 – 88
Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: R Mackenzie (Chair)
R Driver
M Greener
L Hawken
T Stewart

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Gareth Davies, Town Clerk
Stephen Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
Cllr G Smith
1 member of the public

MINUTE NO.	TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	Mover	Seconder	Decision
BA086/23	OPEN SESSION			
	Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. This is for a period of 15 minutes overall and is limited to 3 minutes per person.	N/A	N/A	A local resident made an enquiry regarding CCTV, to which the Chair updated them on the recent decision of Council to terminate support for the system.
BA087/23	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE			
	To receive apologies for absence.	N/A	N/A	Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Robertson.
BA088/23	MINUTES			
	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Budget and Administration Committee meeting held on Monday, 26 February 2024.	MG	RD	The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 26 February 2024 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
BA089/23	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS			
	(i) Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest, (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest), they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in	N/A	N/A	i. There were no disclosures of interests.

	<p>accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 9 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.</p> <p>(ii) To receive and consider requests from members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any items on the agenda an application for dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable members to participate in discussions and voting.</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>ii. There were no requests for dispensation.</p>
BA090/23	SCHEDULE OF POLICIES			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		<p>Updates were received from Members and the Town Clerk on the current situation of policies in the schedule including the Allotments letting policy, Memorial Plaques Policy, Social Media Policy, Habitual or Vexatious Complaints Policy and the Equality and Diversity Policy. Other policies and issues for addition included a Civility and Respect Policy and guidance for Trustees including financial liabilities. It was also agreed there should be three groupings of policies within the schedule:</p>

				<p>Statutory Policies (approved at the Annual Meeting), Other Statutory Policies and Practice Notes.</p> <p>After which it was RESOLVED to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the way forward for the Schedule of Policies, 2. Note that the Civility and Respect Policy will be brought to the April meeting of Council for approval, and 3. Note the updates of Members and the Town Clerk.
BA091/23	AUDIT RESPONSE PROCESS			
	To receive an update from the Town Clerk.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk introduced the item with a reminder that at Council in December Members received a list of responses to the interim audit report. Officers are now planning for the internal audit process after year end and how the Town Council responds, that is, by bringing the audit reports with responses in a similar format to Committee.</p> <p>After which, the Committee RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the proposed process, 2. That the audit, including responses to both the internal and external

				<p>audits be a standing item on every agenda of this Committee,</p> <p>3. That the response plan includes Councillors control checks which would be carried out each time by 2 Members.</p> <p>The Town Clerk then provided a verbal update of actions carried out against the responses provided to the interim audit report including Purchase Order completion and in-house checks, completion of the AGAR, asset register, ICO registration, banking arrangements, GDPR and financial risk assessment.</p> <p>After which, Members RESOLVED to note the update.</p>
BA092/23	REVIEW BANKING ARRANGEMENTS			
	To receive an update from the Town Clerk.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk updated Members that a decision is required by Council to move the main account from the current provider to the Unity Trust Bank. Interest rates on savings accounts need to be reviewed and Officers would expect to bring savings account options to Council.</p>

				After which, the Committee RESOLVED to note the update.
BA093/23	ACTIONS			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To receive an update from the Town Clerk. ii. To consider the draft Terms of Reference. 	Nem con		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Town Clerk reported that County Councillors have agreed to a meeting with the Town Council and they have requested potential dates. The Assistant to the Clerk updated Members that keys will be distributed to all Councillors. ii. The Terms of Reference (ToR) were discussed with the title of the Staffing of the Corporate Resources Committee considered as was co-opting an external HR Advisor to this committee. Also discussed were the ideas of adding transport, environmental regulations and policy, rights of way plus place policy to the Planning ToR with place practice under the jurisdiction of Community and Local Services. In addition, a presentation on Public Health Issues at the Town and

				<p>Parish Conference was discussed.</p> <p>After which, it was RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Staffing and Corporate Resources be renamed the Staffing Committee.2. The ToR 'A duty to scrutinize the Council's work in relation to its duties under the Equalities Act' be moved from the Staffing Committee to the Budget and Administration Committee,3. ToR 1.2.8 be: 'A duty to set out how it will consult with the public on financial and administrative matters to promote engagement of residents and to build trust in the council,'4. Cllr R Driver and Cllr T Stewart produce draft ToR for the Planning Committee to be distributed to members of that Committee in the first instance for comment.5. Representative(s) from the Public Health Team at Northumberland County Council be invited to talk to Council.
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				6. The ToR be brought to April's meeting of Council in the first instance before being brought to the Annual Meeting in May.
BA094/23	BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOTAL ELECTORATE AND S137			
	To note the update.	Nem con		The Town Clerk updated the meeting that S137 of the Local Government Act allows council's to spend an amount of money on any purposes as long as they can demonstrate it is for the benefit of the town. The calculation is based on the number of electorate. Therefore, in Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council's case, the amount is £95,069.02. After which, the Committee RESOLVED to note the update.
BA095/23	JOURNAL ENTRIES			
	To note the update.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the control measure to correct errors which were agreed at the last meeting of this Committee and confirmed that these have now been completed. After which, the Committee RESOLVED to note the update.

BA096/23	SPITTAL SPLASH PARK			
	To consider the quote circulated as a background paper.	Nem con		<p>The Assistant to the Clerk introduced the item with a note that the quote was an increase on last year of circa £265. After which Members asked a number of questions including on the time period of the quote and associated costs with the Splash Park.</p> <p>The Town Clerk then updated Members that Officers are investigating bringing some of the services in-house to create savings. After which, the Committee RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the quote circulated as a background paper, 2. To instruct Officers to bring a report to the June meeting of this Committee regarding bringing some of the services carried out by the provider in-house, and 3. That the costs are relayed to residents via social media.
BA097/23	NOTIFICATION OF PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS			
	To note payments and receipts in January and February.	Nem con		Members asked a number of questions including on transfers between bank accounts, the electricity supply for the

				office, electricity for the depot and the CCTV and office Cloud IT systems. The Committee then unanimously RESOLVED without division to note the schedule of payments and receipts.
BA098/23	BANK RECONCILIATIONS			
	To note the bank reconciliation processes for January and February.	Nem con		Members asked question including on transaction charges and paying money in and also mentioned that the Balances Overview document is a useful addition. After which, the Committee unanimously RESOLVED that the Chair sign and receive the bank reconciliations for January and February 2024.
BA099/23	PURCHASE ORDERS			
	To note the purchase orders raised.	Nem con		An update was provided regarding the poly tunnels. After which, Members unanimously RESOLVED to note all active Purchase Orders for the previous time-period.
BA100/23	ACTION PLAN			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the item and provided updates on the Community Emergency Plan and implementation of the

				<p>Communication Strategy action plan which would be subject of a report to Council.</p> <p>The format of the Action Plan was then discussed, and it was agreed to trial an excel spreadsheet which will include hyperlinks to background documents.</p> <p>Further points raised by Members included the Community Database which should continue to be included in the newsletter and the Council Tax Leaflet for residents to which guidance was provided to Officers on the changes required.</p>
<p>At this point, on the motion of Cllr T Stewart, seconded by Cllr R Driver, it was RESOLVED to suspend standing orders sufficiently to allow the meeting to proceed beyond 8pm.</p>				
				<p>The changes included inserting in to the leaflet that paper copies would be available form the office.</p> <p>After which, the Committee RESOLVED to note the updates.</p>
BA101/23	EXPENDITURE VS BUDGET YEAR TO DATE			
	To note the report.	Nem con		The Town Clerk informed Councillors queries may be emailed to them following

				<p>the meeting. Issues raised included electricity, flagged up earlier in the meeting, and overspends on equipment and furniture plus cleaning.</p> <p>Council will be getting a further report on the outturn.</p> <p>After which, the Committee RESOLVED to note the report and updates of the Town Clerk.</p>
BA102/23	DATE OF NEXT MEETING			
	To be confirmed.	N/A	N/A	Members noted that the next meeting of this Committee will be Tuesday, 07 May 2024.
<p>The Committee RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was appropriate to exclude the media and public from the discussion of the following items of business on the grounds that public discussion may prejudice the Council's position and/or staffing issues may be discussed.</p>				
BA103/23	TENDERING OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		<p>The Committee RESOLVED to approve the process set out in the report to seek / tenders for the installation of Christmas lights, and to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, after consultation with the chair of this committee and the Communities and Local Services Committee to appoint a contractor.</p>