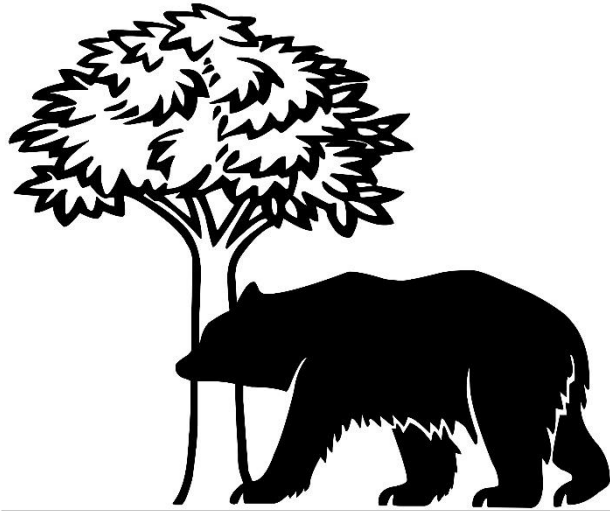


**BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL**



**Berwick-upon-Tweed  
Town Council**

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 18 December  
2023 at 6.00 pm in The Meeting Room, Town Council Office, Unit  
1, 82 – 88 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

**PRESENT:**

Councillors:	J Robertson (Chair)	R Mackenzie
	J Bowden	G Smith
	G Brown	L Stephenson
	R Driver	T Stewart
	M Greener	J Turton
	L Hawken	

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Gareth Davies, Town Clerk  
Stephen Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk  
Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace  
8 members of the public

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF ITEM</b>	<b>Mover</b>	<b>Seconder</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>C121/23</b>	<b>OPEN SESSION</b>			
	<p>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.</p> <p>This is for a period of 15 minutes overall and is limited to 3 minutes per person.</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>Issues and concerns were raised regarding Newfields Play Area, publication of the Council agenda, audio recordings, proper practices and monitoring of the Council's finances. Cllr J Robertson proposed, and it was agreed to move the item regarding Newfields Play Area to after Town Mayor's Announcements and assurances were made regarding publication of the Council agenda on Wednesday. After which, the Town Clerk provided a response to proper practices and monitoring including that a new internal auditor had been appointed who specialised in working with town and parish councils.</p> <p>Cllr T Stewart raised the issue of a reduction in train services and it was agreed that the Town Clerk write a letter to the MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed.</p>
<b>C122/23</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>			
	To receive apologies for absence.	N/A	N/A	There were no apologies for absence.
<b>C123/23</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>			

	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 27 November 2023.	Nem con		Cllr J Turton enquired about the lighting for the tree at the Tweedmouth end of the Old Bridge, and the Mayor provided a response that this is a project for next year. After which, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
<b>C124/23</b>	<b>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS</b>			
	(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 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.	N/A	N/A	i. There were no disclosures of interest.
	(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	N/A	N/A	ii. There were no requests for dispensation.

	of the Localism Act 2011 to enable members to participate in discussions and voting.			
<b>C125/23</b>	<b>TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>			
	To receive announcements from the Town Mayor.	N/A	N/A	The Mayor provided details of events they had attended, including the big sing at Wallace Green Church and the male voice choir with the Civic Party.
<b>C126/23</b>	<b>NEWFIELDS PLAYPARK</b>			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		Cllr G Brown introduced the report, after which, Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Waive the procurement rules for obtaining quotes, and</li> <li>2. Approve the quote provided.</li> </ol>
<b>C127/23</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the report and updated Members that a budget with a 5% increase in the precept instead of an 8% increase could be lawfully produced but there would need to be a trade-off. Councillors then asked a number of questions including on markets, consultations, transparency and increasing the precept. The Mayor also asked a number of questions including on rates, insurance, transport and Civic Costs. After which, Council <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Town Clerk:

				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amalgamate 5400 Mayor Making and 5404 Mayor's Sunday after consultation with the Mayor, and</li> <li>2. Produce 2 draft budgets for consideration with options for both a 5% and an 8% increase in the precept.</li> </ol>
<b>C128/23</b>	<b>RESPONSE TO AUDIT</b>			
	To consider a response to the interim Audit Report.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk gave a verbal explanation to the Audit Response Document and answered a number of questions including a timescale for revising the website and social media.</p> <p>After which, Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt the solutions outlined in the schedule which have not already been actioned, and</li> <li>2. Delegate authority to the Budget and Administration Committee to authorize the spending recommended.</li> </ol>
<b>C129/23</b>	<b>PROPOSALS FOR GROWTH AND SAVINGS</b>			
	<p>Members may wish to consider whether there are any areas of the Council's work where expenditure should grow or where savings can be made.</p> <p>Further proposals in the light of the Staffing Review may be tabled by the Town Clerk.</p>	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk updated Members that a first draft of the Staffing Review had not yet been received and a timescale of before Christmas had been proposed by the consultant.</p> <p>Confirmation was sought regarding areas of growth already suggested which are: the market, the town centre, green spaces and a seasonal worker.</p>

				Council then <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the areas of growth provided.
<b>C130/23</b>	<b>POLICIES</b>			
	To delegate to the Budget & Administration Committee authority to timetable a review of all existing policies.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the item and, after a discussion, Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to delegate to the Budget & Administration Committee authority to timetable a review of all existing policies. Cllr R Mackenzie updated Council that Northumberland ALC had a small working party focussing on induction and training and enquired if any Councillor wished to join. After which, Council <b>RESOLVED</b> that Cllr L Hawken join the working party.
<b>C131/23</b>	<b>STRATEGIC / ACTION PLAN</b>			
	To receive an update (to follow).	Nem con		Cllr G Brown provided a verbal update including that at a meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs, the plan had been fully reviewed. Cllr L Hawken enquired if the Town Council's objectives were on the website. Cllr G Brown responded that a Strategic Plan had been produced which would be shared with Councillors. After which, Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the update and that Cllr G Brown and the Town Clerk would continue to monitor the Action Plan.

<b>C132/23</b>	<b>CO-OPTION</b>			
	To co-opt Members to the vacant seats at 2 x Magdalene Ward and 2 x St Boisil Ward.	Nem con		Council noted the update of the Assistant to the Clerk that no applications had been received.
<b>C133/23</b>	<b>GDPR POLICY</b>			
	<p>Council is recommended to instruct the Town Clerk to undertake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The preparation of a new GDPR / DPA policy based on an analysis of information held, and the ways in which it is held, and</li> <li>ii. To prepare a Model Publication Scheme in accordance with the template proposed by the ICO, and</li> <li>iii. Council is recommended to request the Budget and Administration Committee to propose, and review, charges under the Model Publication scheme.</li> </ul>	Nem con		<p>Cllr T Stewart made an enquiry regarding European legislation to which the Town Clerk provided a response. After which, Council <b>RESOLVED</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Instruct the Town Clerk to prepare a new GDPR / DPA policy based on an analysis of information held, and the ways in which it is held,</li> <li>2. Instruct the Town Clerk to prepare a Model Publication Scheme in accordance with the template proposed by the ICO, and</li> <li>3. Request the Budget &amp; Administration Committee to propose, and review, charges under the Model Publication scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>C134/23</b>	<b>STAFFING AND CORPORATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee held on 02 October 2023 (noted at the meeting of 27 November 2023).</li> </ul>	RM	JT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee held on 02 October 2023.</li> </ul>

	ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee held on 04 December 2023.	GB	TS	ii. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee held on 04 December 2023.
<b>C135/23</b>	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>			
	i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 13 November 2023 (noted at the meeting of 27 November 2023).	RD	TS	i. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 13 November 2023.
	ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11 December 2023.	RD	JT	ii. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11 December 2023.
<b>C136/23</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>			
	The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday, 22 January 2024 at 6 pm.	N/A	N/A	Noted.