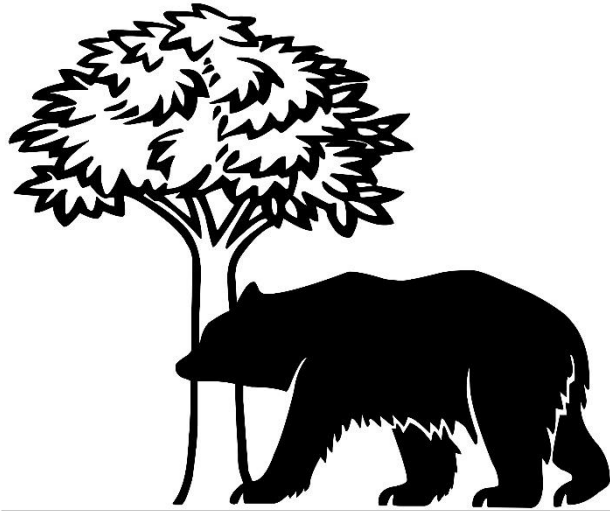


BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



**Berwick-upon-Tweed
Town Council**

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 22 January 2024
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
Cty Cllr G Hill
5 members of the public

MINUTE NO.	TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	Mover	Seconder	Decision
C137/23	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	Members of the public raised issues and concerns regarding the market and management of staff, bus shelters on Ord Drive, use of pesticide, recognition of those who have received honours, attire of the Mayor and Councillors, a development at the Barracks and land near the development at Loaning Meadows. After which, responses were provided by the Mayor and Town Clerk.
C138/23	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE			
	To receive apologies for absence.	N/A	N/A	There were no apologies for absence.
C139/23	MINUTES			
	To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 18 December 2023.	Nem con		Cllr R Mackenzie made an enquiry regarding the Response to the Audit. After which, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
C140/23	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS			
	(i) Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest,	N/A	N/A	i. Cllr R Driver declared a personal interest in Item 16 as being a member of the Berwick Bridge 400 Working Group.

	<p>(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.</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>Cllr M Greener declared a personal interest in Item 16 as being a member of the Berwick Bridge 400 Working Group.</p> <p>ii. There were no requests for dispensation.</p>
C141/23	TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS			
	To receive announcements from the Town Mayor.	N/A	N/A	There were no announcements from the Town Mayor.
C142/23	FUTURE OF BERWICK MARKET			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		Members expressed the belief that discussion of the market should be dealt with in confidence to allow for an open debate which could include information regarding costs of a partner organisation.

				After which, Council RESOLVED to appoint a working party to negotiate and approve under delegated authority the terms for the transfer of the Charter Market lease to Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council provided the sum required by way of premium is no more than £40k.
C143/23	STAFFING REVIEW UPDATE			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk updated Members with the preliminary findings of the Staffing Review including that the full report from the provider is expected in time for the next meeting of the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee. Members then asked a number of questions including on the job title in recommendation 1, timescales and horticultural worker.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delegate authority to the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee to prepare a job description for an operations manager and undertake an open recruitment process, subject to confirmation of appointment by council, 2. Delegate authority to the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee to prepare a job description for a seasonal post of

				<p>Horticultural Assistant and to undertake a recruitment process with authority being delegated to the Town Clerk to make the appointment, and</p> <p>3. Delegate to the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee authority to prepare a succession plan and to discuss with staff including the Town Clerk changes to contracts of work that will enable or reflect the need to have a succession plan.</p>
C144/23	BUDGET PROPOSALS			
	<p>i. Draft Budget, To consider the report of the Town Clerk and associated spreadsheets and to set the budget for 2024-25,</p>	JR	GB	<p>i. The Town Clerk provided a presentation and updated Members on the budget process, inflation, staffing costs plus growth and savings. Also, 2 versions of the budget had been produced with increases in the precept of 5% and 8%. Members then raised a number of points including the risk register, the background paper referring to the recommendation of the Budget and Administration Committee reserves and the difference between a 5% and 8% increase in the precept. On the motion of Cllr J Bowden, seconded by Cllr R Driver, an 8%</p>

	<p>ii. Approval of precept, To set the precept for 2024-25 and to authorise the Town Clerk to notify this to Northumberland County Council (NCC),</p> <p>iii. Approval of Ear Marked Reserves, and To approve the proposed levels of and movements on reserves arising from the budget, and</p> <p>iv. To adopt a revised pay statement consequent upon the proposed Staffing Review. To approve the revised overall level of pay costs and to delegate to the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee authority to approve any changes to contracts and job</p>	<p>Nem con</p> <p>Nem con</p> <p>Nem con</p>		<p>increase in the precept was proposed. The motion fell by 9 votes to 2.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED to set to a budget for 2024-25 that would lead to a 5% increase in the precept,</p> <p>ii. Council RESOLVED to set a precept requirement of £ 364,311.15, leading to a household charge for a Band D property of £104.32 and that Council authorise the Town Clerk to sign the requisition form notifying NCC of the precept requirement,</p> <p>iii. An enquiry was made regarding the Allotment & Woodland Reserve, after which, Council RESOLVED to approve the proposed levels of and movements on reserves arising from the budget, and</p> <p>iv. The Town Clerk provided an update to Members including that the report can demonstrate to auditors that Council has had sight of pay scales. After which, Council RESOLVED to approve the revised overall level of pay costs and to delegate to the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee authority to approve any</p>
--	--	--	--	--

	descriptions arising out of the Staffing Review (report above).			changes to contracts and job descriptions arising out of the Staffing Review.
C145/23	RISK APPRAISAL			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the report, and an enquiry was made regarding Loss of Control. After which, Council RESOLVED to note the report.
C146/23	PURDAH			
	To note the report.	Nem con		An enquiry was made regarding current and previous restrictions concerning legislation and it was noted there was a similar section the Communications Strategy. After which, Council RESOLVED to note the report.
C147/23	COUNCIL TAX LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION			
	To note the report.	Nem con		The Town Clerk introduced the report and during the discussion Councillors agreed that more information should be provided in the leaflet. After which, Council RESOLVED to note the report including the costs involved and further noted that drafts would be circulated in due course.
C148/23	OFFICE INFORMATION SCREEN			
	To consider the report.	Nem con		During the discussion Members noted that the figure of £280 mentioned in paragraph 4 would be an annual cost and that the screen should be portrait rather than landscape.

				<p>After which, Council RESOLVED to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The purchase of an appropriately equipped and sized screen, at £990 exc VAT, and stand, and 2. That a cloud-based Content Management System, with an annual price of £280, be used for the first year, thus allowing Officers to evaluate this option and enabling them to make a recommendation on the future use of the information screen.
C149/23	SCHEDULE OF DELEGATIONS			
	To consider the revised schedule of delegations arising from the staffing review.	Nem con		<p>A Schedule of Delegations was distributed amongst Members and the Town Clerk introduced the report.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED to agree that the format of the report was acceptable.</p>
C150/23	ACTION PLAN			
	To receive an update.	Nem con		<p>The Town Clerk updated Members that a number of points on the Action Plan may be corporate issues rather than action points.</p> <p>After which, Council RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To delegate authority to the Town Clerk to populate a Corporate Issues document, and

				2. That the Corporate Issues document be deferred to the Budget and Administration Committee.
C151/23	CO-OPTION			
	To co-opt Members to the vacant seats at Magdalene Ward x 2, St Boisil Ward x 2 and Upper Spittal Ward x 1.	Nem con		Council noted the update of the Assistant to the Clerk that no applications had been received. After which, Council RESOLVED to instruct the Town Clerk to contact the Elections Office at NCC regarding boundary changes and revised number of Councillors for the Town Council.
C152/23	GRANT APPLICATION			
	To consider a grant application from Berwick Bridge 400.	Nem con		Members raised a number of points including on sponsorship from local businesses, location, use of pesticide and have applications been made to other organisations. It was also noted that the Town Council is being asked to pay in advance of the project, is also being asked to pay the VAT and that more information is required. After which, Council RESOLVED : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To instruct Officers to liaise with Berwick Bridge 400 for a fuller application, 2. To defer the item to the Communities and Local Services Committee and to delegate authority to approve the grant up to a maximum of £2,675, and

				3. As an alternative, if timescales determine, to defer the item to the Budget and Administration Committee and to delegate authority to approve the grant up to a maximum of £2,675.
C153/23	BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE			
	i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 14 November 2023 (noted at the meeting of 27 November 2023).	TS	MG	i. It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 14 November 2023 (noted at the meeting of 27 November 2023).
	ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 15 January 2024.	TS	MG	ii. It was RESOLVED to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Administration Committee held on 15 January 2024.
	iii. Council is invited to consider the following recommendation detailed in minute BA052/23 : BA052/23 : “The Committee RESOLVED : To recommend to Council that the subscription for HR Services be deferred to the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee”.	TS	MG	iii. Council RESOLVED to accept the following recommendation detailed in minute BA052/23 : BA052/23 : “The Committee RESOLVED : To recommend to Council that the subscription for HR Services be deferred to the Staffing and Corporate Resources Committee”.
	iv. Council is invited to consider the following recommendation detailed in minute BA053/23 :	TS	MG	iv. Council RESOLVED to accept the following recommendation detailed in minute BA053/23 :

	<p>BA053/23: “It was RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the Town Clerk’s membership of the IPM be renewed.”</p> <p>v. Council is invited to consider the following recommendation detailed in minute BA055/23:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BA055/23: “The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council approval of the DD’s and subscriptions with the amendments regarding the Tourism Officer subscription, electronic notice boards, CCTV Internet plus Cloud working and HR subscriptions. 2. The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that council authorise that the electricity provider for the Town Council Office be paid by DD.” 	TS	MG	<p>BA053/23: “It was RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the Town Clerk’s membership of the IPM be renewed.”</p> <p>v. Council RESOLVED to accept the following recommendation detailed in minute BA055/23:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BA055/23: “The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council approval of the DD’s and subscriptions with the amendments regarding the Tourism Officer subscription, electronic notice boards, CCTV Internet plus Cloud working and HR subscriptions. 2. The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that council authorise that the electricity provider for the Town Council Office be paid by DD.”
C154/23	COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES COMMITTEE			
	<p>i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Local Services Committee held on 06 November 2023 (noted at the meeting of 27 November 2023).</p>	GB	JR	<p>i. It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Local Services Committee held on 06 November 2023 (noted at the meeting of 27 November 2023).</p>

	<p>ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Local Services Committee held on 08 January 2024.</p> <p>iii. Council is invited to consider the following recommendation detailed in minute CLS058/23: CLS058/23: “The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that support for the Visitor Services Project comes to an end immediately.”</p> <p>iv. Council is invited to consider the following recommendation detailed in minute CLS061/23: CLS061/23: Members considered the correspondence from Northumbria Police and the local supplier. After which, the Committee agreed to uphold the original decision and therefore RESOLVED to recommend to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the support for the existing system should cease, 2. That the existing equipment should be disposed of unless a suitable partner wishes to take on the costs of its 	<p>TS</p> <p>TS</p> <p>TS</p>	<p>GB</p> <p>GB</p> <p>GB</p>	<p>ii. It was RESOLVED to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Local Services Committee held on 08 January 2024.</p> <p>iii. Council RESOLVED to accept the following recommendation detailed in minute CLS058/23: CLS058/23: “The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that support for the Visitor Services Project comes to an end immediately.”</p> <p>iv. Council RESOLVED to accept the following recommendation detailed in minute CLS061/23: CLS061/23: Members considered the correspondence from Northumbria Police and the local supplier. After which, the Committee agreed to uphold the original decision and therefore RESOLVED to recommend to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the support for the existing system should cease, 2. That the existing equipment should be disposed of unless a suitable partner wishes to take on the costs of its
--	--	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	---

	<p>maintenance,</p> <p>3. That council should promote the benefits of wider partnership working in the town (to address any new threats from retail theft), and</p> <p>4. That council should seek to support the police and NCC in partnership working to address any identified alcohol related anti-social behaviour, whether arising from off sales or the night-time economy.</p> <p>v. Council is invited to consider the following recommendation detailed in minute CLS062/23: CLS062/23: The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council approval of the quote of £1,734 i.e. without the optional extra to remove the path as per the drawing on the upper area.</p>	TS	GB	<p>maintenance,</p> <p>3. That council should promote the benefits of wider partnership working in the town (to address any new threats from retail theft), and</p> <p>4. That council should seek to support the police and NCC in partnership working to address any identified alcohol related anti-social behaviour, whether arising from off sales or the night-time economy.</p> <p>v. Council RESOLVED to accept the following recommendation detailed in minute CLS062/23: CLS062/23: The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council approval of the quote of £1,734 i.e. without the optional extra to remove the path as per the drawing on the upper area.</p>
C155/23	PLANNING COMMITTEE			
	<p>i. To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11 December 2023 (noted at the meeting of 18 December 2023).</p>	TS	JT	<p>i. It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11 December 2023 (noted at the meeting of 18 December 2023).</p>

	ii. To note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 09 January 2024.	GS	TS	ii. It was RESOLVED to note the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 09 January 2024.
C156/23	DATE OF NEXT MEETING			
	The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday, 22 April 2024 at 6 pm.	N/A	N/A	Noted.