

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting held on Monday 19 May 2008 at 7 pm at the Parish Centre, Wallace Green, Berwick-Upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	H Bettison	V Pauline
	A Bowlas	J Robertson
	B Douglas	C Routledge
	P Herdman (Chairman)	F Simpson (Vice Chairman)
	G Hill	J Smith
	T Houghton	D Stewart
	I Hunter	J Waterhouse

IN ATTENDANCE:

D Cook (Acting Proper Officer), Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council

S Finch (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council

Nine members of the public.

Councillor Waterhouse, as former Chairman of the Town Committee, took the Chair of this first meeting of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council.

C001/08

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Nominations were invited for the office of Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year 2008/2009. There being two nominations, votes were cast by ballot.

RESOLVED: That Councillor P Herdman be appointed Chairman of the Council for the year 2008/2009.

The Chairman took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C002/08

2. CHAIRMAN'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed, witnessed

by the Acting Proper Officer of the Council.

The Chairman thanked fellow Councillors for allowing him the opportunity to chair the new Council, and looked forward to working with them to promote Berwick-upon-Tweed's interests.

C003/08 3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Nominations were invited for the office of Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year 2008/2009.

RESOLVED: That Councillor F Simpson be appointed Vice Chairman of the Council for the year 2008/2009.

C004/08 4. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Beresford.

C005/08 5. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors Bowlas and Hunter declared personal interests as members of the governing body of the Berwick Development Trust (Item 14).

C006/08 6. STATEMENT BY THE PUBLIC

There were no statements by those members of the public present.

C007/08 7. CO-OPTION OF MEMBER

Members were advised that one seat on St Boisil Ward remained vacant following the election on 1 May, and that should the Council wish to fill this vacancy it would be by co-option. In the event of more than one expression of interest, the successful candidate would need to receive a clear majority of votes.

RESOLVED: (i) That the vacancy on the Council be filled by co-option; and (ii) That the vacancy be advertised on notice boards and by public notice in the press; and (iii) That interested individuals be asked to provide a brief statement about themselves and the contribution which they expected to make to the town; and (iv) that applications be considered, and the selection made, at the next meeting of the Council.

C008/08 8. TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS

Members were advised that a training session for Town Councillors had been arranged for 27 May 2008 at 6.30 pm at the Borough Council offices. The training would be provided by David Francis of Community Action Northumberland.

C009/08

9. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

It was noted that the Council would need to give early consideration to the adoption of Standing Orders, a Code of Conduct, and a structure which would be most effective in enabling the proper delivery of the Council's duties and services.

The Acting Proper Officer and Senior Democratic Services Officer, Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, would prepare a suggested organisational structure for consideration at the next meeting.

Councillor Houghton's offer to provide additional input was welcomed.

C010/08

10. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Acting Proper Officer outlined the main points in the paper which had been tabled (attached to the minutes as Appendix 1). In particular, he advised that the level of precept reflected affordability of the Council's area, and this was the main differentiating factor between Berwick-upon-Tweed and, for example, Morpeth.

It was expected that there would be a total resource in the order of £58850 for use by the Town Council for the remainder of the municipal year 2008/2009.

Members were advised that insurances for the Council should be arranged as a priority, and this could be arranged through the Borough Council's existing Parish Council scheme with Zurich Municipal.

RESOLVED: That the Acting Proper Officer should arrange appropriate insurances for the Town Council.

C011/08

11. APPOINTMENT OF BANK

It was proposed that a current bank account for the Town Council be opened in order that the precept could be transferred, and that the decision about which bank should be used should be delegated.

RESOLVED: That authority to open a Town Council current account with a bank be delegated to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

C012/08

12. APPOINTMENT OF SIGNATORIES

RESOLVED: That the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk (when appointed)

should be the signatories to the current account, and any two of the three should sign each cheque.

CO13/08

13. RECRUITMENT OF CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Acting Proper Officer reported that the half-time post of Clerk had been advertised. Three completed applications had been received. The closing date was 21 May 2008.

RESOLVED: (i) That the shortlisting of applicants would be carried out by the Chairman and Vice Chairman, and by the Personnel Officer of Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council; and (ii) That interviewing of applicants should be by the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Personnel Officer of Berwick-upon-Tweed Council and the Director of Community Action Northumberland.

CO14/08

14. COUNCIL PREMISES

The Acting Proper Officer reported that premises for the Town Council at the William Elder Building, Castlegate had now been secured from Berwick Development Trust by licence for an initial period of twelve months. The office had been furnished and equipped. ICT connections were being arranged.

CO15/08

15. MEETINGS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Members noted that the date of the next meeting would be 23 June 2008 at 6 pm.

The meeting schedule for the remainder of the year was discussed.

RESOLVED: (i) That the full Council meet bi-monthly, and a proposed schedule be presented to the next meeting, and (ii) That for the time being, until the appointment of Clerk, the Chairman be the proper officer for the purposes of signing the summons to attend meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET 2008/09

1. Town Council Precept 2008/09

£46,350 – to be transferred from Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council to the Town Council account.

2. Town Council Election Budget

The Borough Council's Town Committee set up a budget of £10,000 to meet the cost of the Town Council elections.

Approximately £6,500 of expenditure has been accrued against this budget head. Subject to finalisation of accounts, it will be proposed at the Borough Council meeting to be held on the 26th June that the balance of c.£3,500 be transferred to the Town Council.

3. Town Council 'Set-Up' Budget

Town Council also established a 'set-up' budget in the sum of £21,000, principally to meet the costs of resourcing the Town Council office.

Expenditure incurred to date includes:

- £1,460 for a 12 month rental of an office on the 1st floor of the William Elder Building, Castlegate, Berwick-upon-Tweed
- £3,443 for the erection of a partition, fitting of a door and changes to lighting in the office
- £1,535 for IT equipment, including a laptop computer, software and printer
- £1,750 for office furniture (confirmation of discount awaited, so this figure may reduce)
- £615 for the advertisement of the Clerk to the Town Council vacancy
- £130 for an insurance policy
- £496 for BT line and broadband package
- £637 service charge for office

Total = £10,066

Remaining balance = £10,934

There will be some further unseen expenditure to be incurred, but it is anticipated that a balance of approximately £9,000 can be transferred to the Town Council account. Again, that decision will be made at the Borough Council meeting on the 26th June.

4. Town Council Budget for 2008/09

	£46,350
	£3,500
	<u>£9,000</u>
TOTAL	<u>£58,850</u>

The Clerk's salary (£12,272 - £15,299) will need to be met from the 2008/09 budget (together with additional costs which could, depending on pension or gratuity arrangements, bring the gross cost to £20,149, pro rata for the year)