

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 8 September 2008 at 6 pm at The William Elder Building, Castlegate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	J Beresford	V Pauline
	H Bettison	J Robertson
	A Bowlas	C Routledge
	P Herdman (Chairman)	F Simpson (Vice Chairman)
	T Houghton	J Smith
	M McNeely	D Stewart

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Clerk

Two members of the public.

C028/08 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Douglas, Hill, Hunter and Waterhouse.

C029/08 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council held on 23 June 2008 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

C030/08 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillors Bettison, Herdman and Robertson declared a personal interest in Item 9.

Councillor Beresford declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to the Chairman's announcement relating to the Mitchell Memorial Hall.

Councillor Bowlas declared a personal interest in minute P006/08 of the Planning Committee minutes, application reference 08/B/0600.

C031/08 4. STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

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

C032/08

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised Councillors that:

1. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had been invited to attend a meeting of Norham and Islandshire Parish Council Association on 15 September to discuss possible co-operative working.
2. The executive of the unitary authority had decided at their recent meeting that there would be three community forums.
3. New Councillor Introduction and Refresher Training Courses would be held on 30 September and 2 October.
4. The site visit to Mitchell Memorial Hall would be on Monday 6 October at 5.30 pm
5. Councillor Smith had stood down from the Environment and Regeneration Committee as there was a conflict of interest with his role as portfolio holder for the unitary authority.
6. Councillor Stewart had joined the Finance and Resources Committee and therefore stood down from the Environment and Regeneration Committee; and that Councillors Pauline and McNeely had joined the Planning Committee.

C033/08

6. STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED: (i) To adopt the NALC Model Standing Orders as a framework; and

(ii) To delegate to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk incorporation of detail specific to Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, for later approval by the Council; and

(iii) To review the Standing Orders after 6 months and thereafter annually.

[NOTE: The Clerk was requested to provide running lists in advance of meetings.]

C034/08

7. CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were advised that it was mandatory for all local councils to adopt a Code of Conduct. The draft which had been circulated was based on the Local Authority (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007.

RESOLVED: To adopt the Code of Conduct

C035/08

8. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RESOLVED: (i) To adopt with immediate effect the model Financial Regulations as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee; and
(ii) A cash float of £100 to be maintained by the Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk); and
(iii) To delegate to the Finance and Resources Committee a full review of the Financial Regulations within 6 months, and a requirement to make recommendations to Council for any earlier amendments considered necessary.

C036/08

9. BERWICK-UPON-TWEED CORPORATION (FREEMEN) TRUST

The Chairman reported that a meeting had been held with the Chairman of the Trust, following receipt by the Clerk of the letter which had been circulated to members.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to write to both the outgoing Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, and the Council for the County of Northumberland, to propose that Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council is the natural successor to the Borough Council to undertake the administration of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Corporation (Freemen) Trust.

C037/08

10. FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

For the benefit of members of the public and those members who had been unable to attend, the Chairman said the informal meeting held on 1 September had enabled members to consider the potential scope of the Town Council's activities and to highlight those services and powers which most closely met the expectations of the residents. These had been summarised in the report circulated, which further suggested which Committees should take responsibility for each activity.

RESOLVED: (i) To agree the priority areas of activity; and
(ii) To agree the proposed allocation for responsibility for progressing the priority areas as indicated.

[NOTE: Appendix A to these minutes records the activities and the committees which will have responsibility for each].

CO38/08

11. THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND

The Boundary Committee for England had sought the views of Parish and Town Councils on the number of councillors that should serve the new Northumberland Council. Members discussed both the ratio of councillors to electors and the issue of adequate representation in large geographical areas.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to write to the Boundary Committee for England to express the Council's view that whilst the ratio of councillors to electors in the Town Council area was acceptable, they recognised that effective representation of electors in the county's large and sparsely populated rural areas would be difficult with the existing number of councillors.

CO39/08

12. LICENSING ACT 2003 DRAFT CUMULATIVE IMPACT LICENSING POLICY FOR BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

The Town Council had been asked by the Licensing Authority (Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council) to comment on the proposal for a Cumulative Impact Licensing Policy relating to the town centre, the precise area not yet defined.

Concerns raised during discussion of this item included:

1. The potential of such a policy to stifle regeneration of the town centre.
2. Conversely, the lack of such a policy leading to over-provision of the type of facility which encouraged anti-social behaviour, which would deter visitors to the town.
3. The view that the whole town should be included in such a policy if it were introduced.
4. The examination of each application for a licence on its own merits.
5. The success to date of a close informal working relationship with the police, which was preferable to adopting formal policy.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to write to the Licensing Authority to express the Council's view that whilst members wished to support the work of the police in addressing the issue of anti-social behaviour, and to this end would welcome the input of the police to future meetings, they would not wish to prohibit the development of future premises and facilities.

CO40/08

13. ALLOTMENTS

It had been brought to the attention of the Council that in accordance with Statutory Instrument 1999/545, ownership of and responsibility for allotments managed by Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council had automatically transferred to the Town Council (in practice the Town Committee) on 1 April 2008.

RESOLVED: (i) The Clerk to write to the Borough Solicitor to request that Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council continue to hold and manage the allotments for the time being on behalf of the Town Council; and (ii) To delegate to the Finance and Resources Committee the responsibility for liaising with the Borough Council over the longer term arrangements for the transfer of the allotments and their management.

[NOTE: The Clerk to establish legal liability in the meantime]

CO41/08

14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3 September 2008.

[NOTE: The date for the next meeting was changed to 13 October 2008]

CO42/08

15. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 29 July 2008 and 1 September 2008.

CO43/08

16. EVENTS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Events Committee held on 29 July 2008.

CO44/08

17. MEETINGS CALENDAR

RESOLVED: To agree the dates for Council and Committee meetings for the remainder of the municipal year, subject to the amendment to the Planning Committee dates, and the requirement to arrange a different date for the Environment and Regeneration Committee in December.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 6.50 pm.