

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 18 April 2016 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	H Bettison (Town Mayor)	G Hill
	J Beresford	P Hodgson
	I Dixon	J Lang
	A Forbes	G McLean
	T Forrester	G Roughead
	A Gibson	C Seymour
	E Goodyer	G Smith
	K Graham	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Pattison, Town Clerk
County Councillor I Hunter
Steve Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
Joyce Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace
Mr P Taylor, Kompan
Mr T Stephenson, AGS Safety and Security
18 members of the public

OPEN SESSION

Mr Spencer Barclay spoke on several issues

C258/15 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Blackburn (no apologies).

C259/15 2. CCTV

Mr Tony Stephenson, AGS Safety and Security advised Councillors about his company and experience re the supply of CCTV cameras to Berwick-upon-Tweed. Mr

Stephenson advised Councillors that his company had supplied CCTV to the Metrocentre, Gateshead and to many other companies and town councils. Mr Stephenson hopes to start work in May and complete the work by June. It is expected it will take 2 men approximately 10 days to install. The CCTV cameras will last for approximately 10 years but would be subject to weather conditions re salt in the air. There will be 3 year warranty on parts and Mr Stephenson also advised that the lenses on the old CCTV cameras were of top quality and agreed to keep them safely. Cllr Hill advised Mr Stephenson that she had no problem with his company per say but with the actual tender process in which his company was chosen by the Chair of Finance and the Acting Clerk. The Clerk said to Cllr Hill that the Council's standing orders has been followed during the tender process. Cllr Hill disputed this and reiterated her question about who had appointed the tender panel.

C260/15

3. FLAGSTAFF PARK

Mr Paul Taylor, Kompan advised Council there would be an extra charge of £5k if the path between the Junior play park and the toddler park was done in 2 phases as agreed at the last meeting although he had recently been advised that the freehold transfer of the Park was taking place on Friday. Doing the work in 2 phases would entail having to make 2 separate visits. Cllr Hill advised there was no progress management in place, no risk assessment and no paperwork and no mention had been made on the agenda in regard to the freehold transfer. The Clerk advised the agenda had already gone out when the Council's solicitor advised of the proposed freehold transfer. Cllr Seymour wanted to know if the extra land had been factored in and Cllr Hill thought nothing should be agreed until the correct paperwork had been provided. Cllr Forbes advised 2 members of the public wished to speak. **Suspend Standing Orders** Lynley and Jordanna spoke about specific equipment for disabled children and mentioned safety harnesses. **Re-instate Standing Orders.** Mr Taylor advised play equipment must be fully inclusive and not exclusive. Requests re safety harness incorporation could not be factored into the equipment for safety reasons. Cllr Bettison thought the money could be raised to buy the harnesses and keep them safely in a shed with a radar key provided for those who needed to use them. A suggestion to vote on the go ahead of the play park was made with Cllr Goodyer advising a vote was not required as this had already been agreed previously. Cllr Roughead also advised the work at the park in its entirety should go ahead providing

the freehold transfer was signed on Friday. This was proposed by Cllr Hodgson and seconded by Cllr Beresford and agreed by the majority.

RESOLVED: Flagstaff Park play park will go ahead after the freehold transfer is signed on Friday.

C261/15

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 21 March 2016 were proposed by Cllr Beresford and seconded by Cllr Hodgson and agreed and signed as a correct record.

C262/15

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Goodyer item 13 and 15 and Cllr Hill item 15.

C263/15

6. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

There were no requests for dispensation.

C264/15

7. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayoral party has had a busy month and recently attended a concert for the Berwick male voice choir. Particular thanks were given to the organisers of Berwick 900 which Cllr Hunter opened last year and Cllr Bettison closed this year and Cllr Bettison also gave thanks to everyone involved/concerned in the event. Visits were also made to the Sure Start young carer awards, to a 105th Birthday party and the naming ceremony of 2 boats. On Thursday 21st April, the Mayor and Councillors will attend 3 tree planting dedications to celebrate the 90th Birthday of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, starting at Spittal at 4.45pm, Tweedmouth, 5.15pm and Coronation Park, 5.45pm. This will be followed by lighting of the Beacon at 8pm.

C265/15

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Three reports to Council were given by County Cllrs Jones, Hunter and Smith. Cllr Hill questioned Cllr Hunter re the current cramped living conditions of some occupiers of social housing in Prior Park and requested current figures regarding this issue. Cllr Hill also requested information on the proposed merger of 4 Housing with Bernicia, Ashington. Cllr Hunter advised she was no longer on the board and could not supply figures. Cllr Graham expressed concern re Cllr Jones sending what could be termed 'politicised' reports. Councillor Goodyer agreed Councillor Jones report may have breached item one of NCC's Code of Conduct. Councillor Goodyer went on to say it was a pleasure to work with Councillors Hunter and Smith as did Cllr Graham.

C266/15

9. AUTHORISATION OF EXPENDITURE AND ORDERS

Cllr Hill again queried expenses claim 478 made by Cllr Gibson to travel to Morpeth to look at the Morpeth Skate Park. Cllr Gibson responded by advising he had informed the Town Clerk of his fact finding visit and had met with the Deputy Town Clerk of Morpeth and had been given facts and figures which he provided to the Town Clerk. Cllr Hodgson queried invoice 469 which was for Council Training organised by Cllr Hill and provided by NALC at a cost of £300 with no other providers being ascertained re value for money. An angry exchange of words between Councillors occurred and Cllr Mclean then left the meeting.

RESOLVED: It was agreed by Councillors to approve the payments and orders appended to these minutes, with Cllrs Hill, Seymour and Hodgson abstaining.

C267/15

10. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Cllr Bettison advised of the Council's commitment to full transparency and the new regulations had been completed by working closely with Consultant, Mr Stephen Warren. All Councillors agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To approve adoption of the Financial Regulations.

C268/15

11. REVISED DRAFT OBJECTIVES

Cllr Bettison asked for Council approval of the Berwick Town Council Mission Statement. Cllr Lang asked if demonstrable change could be changed to positive change. This was agreed and was proposed by Cllr Hodgson and seconded by Cllr Graham and agreed by all.

RESOLVED: To adopt the Mission Statement, changing the word 'demonstrable' for 'positive' change.

C269/15

12. DRAFT RISK REGISTER

Cllr Lang advised he had not taken part in the workshops/discussions but felt a scoring system would give more clarity re Risks. Cllr Bettison advised this was unnecessary as this was now seen as mitigation. Councillors agreed.

RESOLVED: To agree adoption of Risk Register.

C270/15

13. LEADER EOI FOR A BORDERS DESTINATION ORGANISATION

Cllr Goodyer thanked Cllr Lang for his input in regard to completing an EOI application for a Borders Destination Organisation funding request re LEADER and requested Council permission to make this application. This was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: Approval to apply for funding for Borders Destination Organisation.

C271/15 **14. LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Cllr Goodyer advised Council of the current Neighbourhood Plan's progress and said there had been 100's of responses from the public. Cllr Goodyer said 7 Topic groups, had been decided, Youth, Housing, Employment and Skills, Transport, Tourism, Built Environment and Natural Environment. Volunteers were needed to join the Topic Groups and this has been advertised in the local paper and Cllr Goodyer urged the public to get in touch.

C272/15 **15. CAR PARKING**

The Clerk advised complaints had been received in regard to no 'long stay' parking places available in Town after 9am due to workers parking from early morning until late afternoon. Cllr Hill thought there should be an open and wide consultation. Cllr Goodyer advised of good news in regard to planning permission granted for 19 new spaces at the Berwick Station car park. Cllr Goodyer also thought the £3.50 charge made at the Station car park drove people out of the station and into the long stay free parking places within the town centre. After a debate it was agreed to hold a public meeting to discuss further and this will take place on May 25th 2016 at the Annual Town meeting.

RESOLVED: To hold a public meeting to discuss car parking issues on May, 25th 2016 at the Guildhall, Berwick.

C273/15 **16. SPITTAL BATHING BEACH AND WATER QUALITY**

Councillors expressed concern at the report by DEFRA on water quality at Spittal which was classed as poor. As Spittal is a designated bathing beach this means the landowner has to display signage during the 2016 bathing season 15th May to 30th September, to advise the public that the classification is poor and bathing is not advised. After discussion it was agreed the Clerk would arrange a meeting with Scottish Borders Council re effluent coming off the fields on the Scottish side of the border, DEFRA, NCC, Anne Marie Trevelyan and Calum Kerr to discuss this further.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will arrange a meeting to discuss water quality issues.

C274/15 **17. MEMBER OBLIGATIONS**

Councillor Bettison spoke to Council in regard to the severe strain and pressures she had encountered during her year in office, due in main to Cllr Hill. Cllr Bettison went on to say that although Cllr Hill purported to be campaigner for transparency, her social media postings were opaque. 6 Councillors had left the Council in the last year and 4

new Councillors had also considered resigning along with the Acting Clerk. There were always 2 sides to every story and a lot of postings/allegations on social media made by Cllr Hill had affected not only individual Town Councillors but also their families. Cllr Bettison said she had been a Councillor for 16 years and had never before had to deal with issues she had experienced very recently and said that Cllr Hill's reign of terror was coming to an end. Cllr Hill said Cllr Bettison's statement was a disgrace, indulgent and hypocritical and that this was a failure of leadership, not letting people speak, phoney figures provided to Councillors and the public and quoted the Nolan Principles and in particular mentioned Objectivity. Cllr Hill said she considered around one third of the Council acted according to the Nolan principles. Cllr Hill mentioned other town councils, saying that town councils across the country were run very badly and the individuals who challenge this always get attacked and become subject to character assassination. Councillor Goodyer then proposed to reaffirm the adoption of Member Obligations/Code of Conduct, this was seconded by Cllr Hodgson and agreed by all. Cllr Bettison answered Mr Spencer Barclay's question.

RESOLVED: To reaffirm and agree Member Obligations/Code of Conduct.

C275/15

18. GUIDANCE ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY MEMBERS

Cllr Roughead advised that Policy and Strategy had looked at the content of the Social Media policy and had made a few changes and some additions. Cllr Hill advised it was a guidance and not a policy. Cllr Roughead advised that the policy should be adopted and any changes could be made at a later date. Cllr Seymour wanted to know if the policy came from NCC. Cllr Bettison also mentioned harassment and advised Councillors and Staff that if anyone felt they were being harassed on social media and/or/both by email or mobile phone text messages, they were to ring the Police by dialling 101 and an Officer would be sent to investigate. The social media policy was then agreed by all with Cllr Hill abstaining.

RESOLVED: To adopt the Social Media Policy.

C276/15

19. TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

It was generally agreed that the current Town Council website was out of date and it was decided to form a Council Task Group to look at necessary and up to date website requirements and how much information should be carried over to a new website bearing in mind the website was nearly 8 years old and contained a lot of documents. Cllr Lang, Cllr Roughead and Cllr Hodgson will look into this further.

RESOLVED: Cllrs Lang, Roughead and Hodgson will report back to Council re necessary requirements for a new and easy to use Council website.

C277/15

20. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Hodgson and seconded by Cllr Roughead and agreed by all.

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 7 March 2016.

C256/15

21. STAFFING COMMITTEE

The Staffing Minutes accuracy was queried by Cllr Hill in regard to the confidential item and Cllr Seymour wished to query whether her amendment to item 5 had been incorporated and was advised that it had been. The minutes were then proposed by Cllr Graham and Seconded by Cllr Smith and agreed by all apart from Cllr Hill who voted against.

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 1 February 2016.

C257/15

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 9 May 2016 at 6 pm.

Council

Appendix A
Item 9
18th April 2016

**Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED**

See page 3 for accompanying explanatory notes

Voucher	Code	Date	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
15-16								
469	Councillor Training	31/03/2016	101293	Training	Community Action Northumberland	300.00	0.00	300.00
470	IT Support	31/03/2016	101294	IT support	Northern Lab	90.00	18.00	108.00
471	Hoppa Bus	31/03/2016	101295	Design services bear logo	J Herbert	100.00	0.00	100.00
472	NAS Subscription	31/03/2016	101296	Subscription	National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Ltd.	55.00	11.00	66.00
473	Public Realm Works	31/03/2016	101297	Plants	Cheviot Trees	98.66	19.73	118.39
474	Water	31/03/2016	directdebit	Water services	Northumbrian Water	52.60	0.00	52.60
475	Bounds Riding	31/03/2016	101298	Barrier supply	Northumberland County Council	898.78	179.76	1,078.54
476	Bins - litter/grit	31/03/2016	101298	Litter bin replacement	Northumberland County Council	186.54	37.31	223.85
477	Bins - litter/grit	31/03/2016	101298	Litter bin replacement	Northumberland County Council	181.04	36.21	217.25
478	Councillor Travel & Subsistence	31/03/2016	101299	Mileage	A. Gibson	58.23	0.00	58.23
479	Councillor Travel & Subsistence	31/03/2016	101299	Mileage	A. Gibson	12.60	0.00	12.60
480	Councillor Travel & Subsistence	31/03/2016	101300	Mileage	C Seymour	44.10	0.00	44.10
16-17								
1	Other Marketing	08/04/2016	101300	Leaflet Distribution - Events	A-ha! Distribution	300.00	60.00	360.00
2	Public Realm Works	08/04/2016	101301	Paints, brushes, equipment etc.	Glendale Paints	25.50	5.10	30.60
3	Stationery & Printing	08/04/2016	101302	Stationery	Shiel Morrison	39.00	7.80	46.80
4	Stationary & Equipment	08/04/2016	101303	Printing	Northumberland County Council	141.45	28.29	169.74

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS TO BE NOTED

See page 3 for accompanying explanatory notes

Voucher	Code	Date	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
5	Salaries: Pension	08/04/2016	directdebit	Pension	NEST	220.33	0.00	220.33
6	Telecoms	08/04/2016	directdebit	phone	BT	63.75	12.75	76.50

Explanatory Notes to accompany payment list.

Voucher	Notes
15-16	
469	Charge for Councillor Training delivered by NALC
470	Monthly IT support
471	Design work for Hoppa Bus Logo
472	Allotment Society subscription
473	Trees for Queen's birthday
474	Office water supply
475	NCC support services for Bounds Riding; paid from Schedule III surplus
476-7	Costs of litter bin installation in Marygate
478	Costs of visit to Morpeth re play area developments
479	Costs of ordering/collection visits for trees for Queen's birthday
480	Costs of attending NALC committee meeting
16-17	
1	Part costs of leaflet distribution
2	Materials for maintaining planters
3	Business cards and complement slips for Acting Clerk
4	Posters, leaflets and feedback cards for Neighbourhood Plan
5	Monthly pension payment; reflects back pay from salary point increase
6	Phone line charges