

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 19 January 2015 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors:	I Hunter (Town Mayor)	J Lang
	J Beresford	G McLean
	H Bettison (to Item 9 only)	J Robertson
	I Dixon	G Roughead
	G Hill	C Seymour
	G Jones	F Simpson

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk
S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk
R Leetham, Finance Officer (to item 10 only)
M Richardson, Sheriff
J Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace
25 members of the public

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

A member of the public expressed concerns that Portas was being used as an excuse as to why the town cannot move forward and he understood that NEREO had contacted the Town Council 12 months ago advising a meeting should be held so they could present their finding and why has this not happened. Also concerns were raised regarding a resident that wished to be considered for co-option and advertising costs due to be discussed later in the meeting.

Issues were raised regarding employment issues between two former County Council employees and Northumberland County Council and the petition which Councillors offered to sign at a previous meeting which has not been forthcoming.

An enquiry was also made as to why a proposed meeting with Northumberland County Council had not gone ahead.

C073/14 **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been accepted on behalf of: Councillors T Forrester (work commitment) and A Gibson (unwell).

Absent: Councillor A Turnbull.

C074/14 **2. MINUTES**

- i. The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 29 September 2014 were agreed and signed as a correct record.
- ii. The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 13 October 2014 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the following note being included: 'Members of the public present refused to leave the Council Chamber and the meeting was subsequently suspended. The meeting moved to the Mayor's Parlour (excluding the press and public) and the police were called to attend to those members of the public who refused to leave the Council Chamber.'

C075/14 **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor H Bettison declared a personal interest in Item 12 (Freemen AGM September 2015);

Councillor I Dixon declared a personal interest in Item 12 (Freemen AGM September 2015);

Councillor I Hunter declared a personal interest in Items 8 (Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy) and 12 (Freemen AGM September 2015);

Councillor G Jones declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 8 (Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy).

Councillor G McLean declared a personal interest in Item 14 (Environment And Regeneration Committee);

Councillor J Robertson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 12 (Freemen AGM September 2015).

Councillor F Simpson declared a personal interest in Item 12 (Freemen AGM September 2015).

C076/14 **4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

Councillors I Hunter and G Jones requested dispensation on Item 9 (Budget 2015-16). This was agreed.

C077/14 **5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported on events attended since the last Council meeting. This included the literary Festival, Remembrance Sunday and the Annual Boxing Day Dip which raised about £330 for the Mayor's Charity.

C078/14 **6. ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR**

RESOLVED: That Councillor H Bettison be appointed Deputy Town Mayor for the remainder of the 2014-15 municipal year.

C079/14 **7. CO-OPTION OF MEMBER**

Due to the passing away of Councillor John Stephenson one seat remained vacant in Grove Ward. Following publication of a public notice one candidate had applied to be appointed to the vacancy within the deadline advertised and one candidate had applied after the deadline. Members agreed that only the candidate who had applied within the timescale should be considered.

RESOLVED: To exclude the press and public during the following discussion, which included issues of a personal and confidential nature.

It was proposed and seconded that

RESOLVED: Gary Smith to be appointed to Grove Ward.

RESOLVED: To re-open the meeting to the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.

The Town Mayor congratulated Mr G Smith and welcomed him as a member of the Town Council.

Councillor G Smith signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

C080/14 **8. NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY**

[NOTE: Councillor G Jones, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, left the meeting during consideration of this item].

The Council had been invited to comment on the Draft Northumberland Local Plan

Core Strategy.

RESOLVED: That Members email their comments to the Town Council office by 1 February 2015, so that a response may be formulated on behalf of the Town Council by the stipulated deadline.

C081/14

9. BUDGET 2015-16

Councillor G Roughead reported that the Finance and Resources Committee had considered estimates for the year 2015-16 and agreed that on the basis of proposed expenditure the precept requirement would remain the same as 2014-15, representing £68.97 per Band D property. Concerns were raised, however, over the amount of general reserves that would potentially be used.

RESOLVED: To agree the budget and precept for 2015-16.

Note: The proposed budget was voted upon and the results were 9 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

[NOTE: Councillor H Bettison left the meeting after discussion of this item and took no further part in the meeting.]

C082/14

10. ANNUAL AUDIT FOR 2013-14

RESOLVED: To approve the audited annual return and issues arising report.

Councillor G Hill wished it minuted that she did not accept this decision.

C083/14

11. STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RESOLVED: To consider the proposal by Councillor G Hill to adopt the revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and in accordance with Standing Order 79 adjourn this item without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of Council.

C084/14

12. FREEMEN AGM SEPTEMBER 2015

[NOTE: Councillor J Robertson, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, left the meeting during consideration of this item].

The AGM of the Freemen of England and Wales will be held in Berwick 11 to 13 September 2015. The Guild of Freemen would be grateful if the Mayor could attend events during the course of the weekend including the buffet lunch on the Sunday at the conclusion of the AGM. In the past this has been hosted by the local authority including in 2010 by the Town Council. Any costs involved would be paid from Civic Expenses.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council host the buffet lunch on Sunday at the

conclusion of the AGM.

C085/14

13. PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 9 September 2014, 30 September 2014, 21 October 2014 and 25 November 2014.

C086/14

14. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee meetings held on 15 September 2014 and 10 November 2014.

C087/14

15. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 21 July 2014, 22 September 2014 and 17 November 2014.

Councillor G Hill abstained from this Item.

C088/14

16. STAFFING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Staffing Committee held on 7 July 2014 and 24 September 2014.

Councillor G Hill abstained from this Item.

C089/14

17. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: Councillor J Robertson to represent the Town Council on the Conservation Area Advisory Group once the invitation has been received.

C090/14

18. CALENDAR OF DATES FOR 2015-16

RESOLVED: To adopt the calendar of meetings for 2015-16.

C091/14

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Monday, 23 March 2015 at 6 pm in the Town Hall.