

## BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 20 January 2014 at 6 pm at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

#### PRESENT:

Councillors:	I Hunter (Town Mayor)	J Lang
	H Bettison	J Robertson
	I Dixon	G Roughead
	P Elliott	C Seymour
	T Forrester	F Simpson
	A Gibson	J Stephenson
	G Hill	A Turnbull
	G Jones	

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

S Finch, Town Clerk

S Cozens, Assistant to the Clerk

R Leetham, Finance Officer

M Richardson, Sheriff

W F Grant, Mayor's Consort

K Stephenson, Sheriff's Lady

J Benton, Sergeant-at-Mace

County Councillor Jim Smith

David English, Principal Planner, Northumberland County Council

Julie Seaton, Rural Development Manager, Northumberland County Council

3 members of the public

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

#### OPEN SESSION

Members of Berwick-upon-Tweed Fair Trade Group presented the Mayor with a Certificate which renewed Berwick-upon-Tweed's status as a Fair Trade Town.

CO91/13

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted on behalf of: Councillor J Beresford (personal).

**CO92/13**

## **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meetings held on 25 November 2013 and 2 December 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Councillor G Jones wished it recorded that Councillor T Forrester read from a script in advance of discussion of Item 6 of the Council meeting held on 2 December 2013.

**CO93/13**

## **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

**CO94/13**

## **4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

There were no requests for dispensation.

**CO95/13**

## **5. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported on events attended since the last Council meeting and reported on money raised for the Mayor's Charities over the festive period.

**CO96/13**

## **6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

David English, Principal Planner at Northumberland County Council gave a presentation to the meeting on the background, objectives and process of Neighbourhood Planning, with assistance from Julie Seaton, Rural Development Manager, Northumberland County Council.

Councillors were given the opportunity to participate in a short Question and Answer session following the presentation.

**RESOLVED: That (i) a Neighbourhood Plan be produced for Berwick-upon-Tweed: and (ii) the Town Council's Strategy and Policy Working Group should lead in considering the next steps.**

**CO97/13**

## **7. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL WORKING WITH TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

To consider a response to the letter 'Working with Town and Parish Councils' received from Barry Rowland, Corporate Director of Local Services at Northumberland County Council.

**RESOLVED: That Councillors email their comments to the Clerk who will**

**then formulate a response.**

**CO98/13**

## **8. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS**

Members considered a proposal by Councillor P Elliott that they should provide a report to Council meetings about issues within their wards and how these are being addressed. Reports could be received either from individual members or on a Ward basis.

**RESOLVED: To agree the proposal by Councillor P Elliott.**

**CO99/13**

## **9. STANDING ORDERS**

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To consider the proposal by Councillor G Hill relating to filming, videoing, photography and audio recording at council Meetings, and in accordance with Standing Order 79 adjourn this item without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of Council; and**
  - (ii) To agree the proposal made at the meeting on 25 November 2013 that the following be incorporated into Standing Orders: 'Where matters require urgent attention outside the meeting schedule, to delegate authority to make decisions to the Clerk in consultation with two of: the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and the Chairman of one Standing Committee. Any such decision should be reported to the next meeting of Council or relevant Committee.'; and**
  - (iii) To consider adopting the terms of reference for the Staffing Sub-Committee (as agreed by the Staffing Committee on 13 November 2013 with the exception of an amendment to the quorum and the requirement for the Staffing Committee Chair to be a member), proposed by Councillor F Simpson :**
    - i. That the Staffing Sub-Committee comprises three members of the Staffing Committee including the Chair and that a quorum shall be three.**
    - ii. To consider grievance or disciplinary matters in accordance with the Council's grievance or disciplinary policies.**
    - iii. To manage, supervise and appraise the Clerk, administer leave requests, record and monitor absences from work.**
    - iv. To consider any appeal by the Clerk against a decision on pay.**
- and in accordance with Standing Order 79 adjourn this item without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of Council; and**

- (iv) **To consider the resolution, proposed by Councillor F Simpson, that the Council's Standing Orders should confirm that the public has no advance notification or right to attend a meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee, the decisions of which, under responsibilities delegated by the Staffing Committee, will always concern individual staff members, disclosure of which would breach the obligations of the Council under the Data Protection Act 1998, and in accordance with Standing Order 79 adjourn this item without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of Council.**

**CO100/13 10. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Reports were received from County Councillors I Hunter, G Jones and J Smith on their divisions and within the county as a whole.

[The reports are appended to these minutes].

**CO101/13 11. PARISH LIAISON WORKING GROUP**

Members noted the report by Councillor I Hunter.

**CO102/13 12. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 22 October 2013 and 26 November 2013.**

**CO103/13 13. ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: To adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee held on 11 November 2013.**

**CO104/13 14. FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Councillor J Stephenson reported that the Finance and Resources Committee had considered estimates for the year 2014-15 at the meeting held on 16 December 2013 and agreed that on the basis of proposed expenditure the precept requirement would be £218,220, representing £68.97 per Band D property.

**RESOLVED: (i) To agree the budget and precept for 2014-15; and (ii) To adopt the minutes of the meetings of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 18 November 2013 and 16 December 2013.**

Councillor G Hill wished it recorded that she did not consider the minutes of the meetings of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 18 November 2013 and 16 December 2013 to be accurate.

**CO105/13**

**15. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**RESOLVED:** (i) Councillor I Hunter to represent the Town Council on the Northumberland Town and Parish Council Charter Review Group; and (ii) Councillor G Roughead to represent the Town Council as a HELM (Heritage Environment Local Management) Champion.

**CO106/13**

**16. CALENDAR OF DATES FOR 2014-15**

**RESOLVED:** To adopt the calendar of meetings for 2014-15.

**CO107/13**

**17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 24 March 2014 at 6 pm in the Town Hall.

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

### **Report received from County Councillor I Hunter.**

The main item at the foremost of the minds of the Administration is the budget which will be considered in February, this included the removal of free Post 16 transport this will have an effect on our youngsters accessing further education. The Labour Administration are planning to sell County Hall and move staff back out into the local offices, I await to see if we see if there is an advantage for us. County Council are looking to work closer with Town & Parish Councils. The Local Charter is under Review, Town & Parish Council's will be consulted.

#### **My Ward**

The top of Dean Drive was resurfaced in December; the exit from Dean Drive on to Cemetery Lane is now easier due to the removal of the rumble strips. I continue to push for the roads to be resurfaced in Prior due to their current state.

## **Report received from County Councillor G Jones.**

Here's a quick update of the main County issues I am working on locally.

**Greenses Residents Parking** - this is a long process, but I believe we have achieved compromise on the issues of conflict. The officer is working on 42 schemes at the moment, including parking on Marygate, so I've still not received his report (after which there is public notification required).

**Bowling Club Parking** - I asked the officer responsible for putting down the yellow lines (at my predecessor's request) to review options and come back to me in February - not sure how a version of that got into the paper.

**Garage Rents** - Four Housing differentially charge between Four Housing tenants and private owners. Met with a number of residents, Councillor Elliott and Four Housing on this. Four Housing are going to investigate options.

**NHS** - I will be joining a "Berwick Patient Care Task and Finish Group" at the request of the Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I have asked that patient & visitor transport be included as an issue.

## **Report received from County Councillor J Smith.**

I made a site visit to Spittal Play Park with a contractor and Cllr. Ivor Dixon to price for installation of new swings and the removal of one rusted swing support. I have now received four tenders for the works which are now under consideration.

I arranged for an urgent footpath repair on Billendean which was carried out immediately by NCC Neighbourhood Services.

I reported the variation of lamp standards and types of lighting on Spittal Prom and the Spa Well following a site visit with a Spittal resident. There was also a concern about the height of new electricity poles erected in Cow Road without consultation with the residents. Early enquiries suggest that the utilities don't need to consult with residents so further investigations to be carried out.

I attended the AONB Annual Forum in Alnmouth where presentations were given on the prehistoric site uncovered on the sand dunes at Druridge Bay and the shipwreck on Bamburgh Beach. I am a member of the NCC Family and Children's services Overview and Scrutiny Committee where the recent critical OFSTED report is being discussed and ways of improvement are being planned. Also on the agenda is the budget proposal to charge post sixteen students £450 per year towards the cost of their travel which will affect students in rural areas, especially Berwick. I was honoured to present the certificates of achievement at the Berwick Academy Prize Giving in December and was very impressed by the students and their qualifications. I congratulated them for doing so well and encouraged them to carry on the good work with a reminder that in life there are many things we have to do that we don't want to do and we have to do them well.